

# Hedvig Endrei

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Budapest

Hungary

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Date of interview: October-November 2006

Hedvig Endrei is a nice and friendly woman, her mental alertness is fascinating. The make-up, the perfume and the elegant costume are still an essential part of her life, even at the age of 92. Her apartment on Karoly Boulevard, where she has lived since 1941, is very cozy. On the table, covered with a white tablecloth, there are always porcelain cups, silver teaspoons and biscuits even the unexpected guest is being treated to. On the family pictures, hung on the wall, the members of the Endrei family can be seen, making the only living member of the family to remember them every day.



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## My family background

My maternal grandparents came from Tolna County. They lived in Bonyhad. My grandfather was Adolf Reich. I don't remember whether Grandpa had any siblings or not. My grandfather's family and the relatives didn't really deal with agriculture, rather with stock-farming. I remember a one-storied house with a garden.

My grandfather married twice. The family never talked about my real grandmother. I don't know anything about her, because she died very early. She was probably also from Bonyhad. They met there. The step-grandmother was a certain Aunt Betti [Bettina Reich]. I don't know whether she was from Budapest or not. I only remember her from here, from Pest. My grandfather and my step-grandmother were buried here in Budapest. Two girls were born from my grandfather's first marriage, my mother, Roza Reich, and my aunt, Hermina Reich. My mother and grandma Betti were on good terms, they liked each other. At least I don't know of any conflicts between them.

Four children were born from my grandfather's second marriage, three girls and a boy. Jenő Reich was the boy. The girls were Frida or Frici Reich, Sara Reich and Eszter Reich. My mother was the oldest, then came Hermina, then the step-siblings: Frici, Sari [Sara], Eszti [Eszter] and Jenő, who was the youngest. They were born one after the other, they weren't many years apart. So my mother had a blood-sister and four step-siblings. Despite this they got along well, while they lived

they were close to each other. My mother's step-siblings were all milliners. Frida's milliner's shop was on 12 Vamhaz Boulevard, my aunt Eszti had one on Klauzal Street, and Jenó had a hat-shop on 57 Rakoczi Avenue. I even worked for him later. Jenó's wife was Jolan. She was a Jewish girl. She spoke with a stammer. She was also a milliner; they worked together in their shop on Rakoczi Avenue. Jenó was a soldier during World War I. When I was born in 1915, he still fought, and when he came home, he didn't even know that I had been born. My brother was very much interested in military uniforms and weapons as a child; he always followed him [Jenó] and asked him the names of the weapons. I also had to be there as a small child of course. And my uncle always pushed me aside, because he didn't know who I was. I was always pale and skinny, and once, when Jenó had already sent me away several times, he asked who this green frog was. This became a saying in the family, but my mother felt very much offended that her brother said such a thing about her daughter.

Sari was the only one of the siblings who wasn't a milliner. She was a housewife.

Eszti had a daughter, Medi, from her first husband, who was called Ungar. Her second husband was Laszlo Schwartz; Gyuri [György] was born from their marriage. Both the child and the man were deported, they died. Eszti wasn't deported. She died at the Hermina rest home in the country.

Sari had two children, Baba and Fredi [Alfred]. Fredi is still alive; he lives in an old-age home in Budapest. Baba also lives in Budapest. She is in the hospital quite a lot now. Sari was deported with her husband, and they never came back.

Frici didn't have any children. She died earlier, before the deportation. Jenó has a son, Bandi [Andor], and a daughter Lucy [Aliz]. The boy wasn't deported, because he managed to immigrate to Israel [then Palestine] before the war with his wife, but he came back, quite a few years after the war, and he didn't feel well. He has two daughters and two sons; one of them is in a wheelchair now. I don't remember what Andor did, he just died recently. Lucy wasn't deported. She also lived in Budapest with her husband. She opened a shop right after the war, because her husband was a tailor. This shop didn't last for long, for a couple months perhaps, because then she emigrated somewhere, I think to Chile, and she stayed there. She once went to buy some buttons, because she worked at home at that time, she sewed for her mother, and she never came back. She didn't tell anyone, she just didn't come home. I don't know how she planned all this.

The relatives in Bonyhad were very religious Orthodox Jews <sup>1</sup>. We spent the summer several times in Bonyhad when we were children; we spent quite a lot of time there. This must have been in the 1920s-1930s. They observed the holidays strictly, the Friday night for example. They stopped working on Friday afternoon; they cleaned the house, then cooked dinner. There was meat soup and beef with tomatoes quite often. We had to eat that almost every Friday. When we spent the summer there we went to the synagogue in Bonyhad on Friday evenings. And nobody worked on Saturdays. They managed a kosher household of course. My grandfather observed the rules of the kosher household strictly. I don't know anything of the relatives from Bonyhad. They might have been deported.

I don't know when my grandparents moved from Bonyhad to Pest, but my mother and my father met here in Pest, in the Liget [City Park]. My grandfather and his two daughters, Hermina and Roza, used to take walks in the Liget every Sunday.

I didn't know my paternal grandparents. They were from Budapest. Unfortunately I don't know much about my paternal grandfather. His last name was Weisz and I know that he was blind. I remember that when Grandpa was at our place once, in my childhood, he bumped his head on one of the shelves and I asked him, not knowing about anything, if it hurt. Then I got a beating from my parents. At that time I didn't know that he was blind and that it wasn't allowed to talk about it. Grandpa died when I was at middle school [2](#). I never met my maternal grandmother. I don't even know her name. She was probably also from Budapest.

There were three siblings in my father's family: my father, Albert Weisz, his sister, Regina, and Geza Vajda. Regina married Armin Reisz. They were grocers. I don't know what their shop was called, only that it was a prospering grocery store before the war. They lived on Rozsa Street and the shop was across the street. They weren't religious, they were rather Neolog [3](#). They had three children, two daughters and a son: Laszlo, Iren and Babi. We were at the Armins' only a couple times, we didn't like it there. The boy became a writer. Iren was in the camp in Lichtenwörth [today Austria] with me. She came back, but she died shortly after the liberation. She fell ill with so many diseases there that she didn't last for long. She was buried there, in the Lichtenwörth lot. Babi was hip-shot. At that time they didn't operate this illness. She wasn't deported because of her illness. She died here, in her own apartment on Rozsa Street, of cardiac decompensation. Regina and Armin lived for quite long, they survived the war, too.

My uncle magyarized his name from Geza Weisz to Geza Vajda when he got married. His wife was called Ilona Szerdahelyi. She came from the Szerdahelyi family. She had several siblings. One of her brothers, Aladar Szerdahelyi, was a cork-cutter. He invented the cork and he was the first to manufacture it. [Corks were used to close wine bottles already in the middle ages. The first cork factory was founded in Portugal in 1750.] They made corks for wine bottles. He was very wealthy. My uncle was an accountant. They lived here in Budapest, on Visegrad Street, and my aunt complemented my uncle's salary by taking in boarders, because they couldn't have lived off a clerk's salary. In their apartment there was a small bedroom, and students from the country, who studied here in Pest, lived in there. It wasn't the main criteria, but mainly Jewish children lived there, there were rarely non-Jewish ones. Partly this was because it was much cheaper and it was also much more satisfying for the parents to know that their children were with trustworthy people. The family took on supervision, studied with the children, so that they would have good results. The curfew was 10pm, and they also gave them food, not only accommodation. My aunt cooked for them, and the parents partly paid for it and also sent eggs and meat, chicken and things like that.

My uncle died quite early, but they had a plot in Balatonzamárdi and my aunt organized summer holidays there not only for children from the family, but strangers, too. The children of relatives also paid her. We spent the summer there every year. We, the children from the family lived in the same summer cottage with them, which my aunt owned, but only the immediate family lived there. There was a bedroom there, a kitchen, and the pantry was also transformed into a room. There was even a toilet built in. This kind of summer vacation lasted for a long time, until the beginning of the war.

It all started with paid summer holidays for children, in the 'small house' at first, then she had the idea that she would serve lunch in the summer house, then around 1935 my aunt decided to build a pension and offer summer holidays for adults, too. So she enlarged the existing building, and she had another building annexed to it: the Pension of Mrs. Vajda Géza, it was called later. This was

made out of wood and she rented it to summer holiday-makers, and she organized paid summer holidays for the children there later. It was customary at that time that the women went on a holiday with their baby for two-three weeks, and the husbands came there with the so-called bull-train on Saturday afternoon. They spent the Sunday there and my aunt cooked. This was a summer house that only had side walls; it didn't have a roof, and if it rained they covered it so that people wouldn't get wet. The mothers and their children ate lunch there during the week, and on Saturdays and Sundays the entire family did. My aunt gave half portions, too, for the little children. After lunch, I remember, she took a bowl with fruit or cookies, took it in the courtyard and passed them around for free. Sometimes the villagers also got some, although children from the village were rarely there. It was a mixed company, not only Jewish families spent the summer and ate in such a way. These people were all so wealthy that they could pay for the accommodation and food. The pension operated from the second half of the 1930s until the beginning of the war.

There was a bar in Zamardi, where a brother and sister, who lived in Zamardi, danced. They were also Jewish. The boy was Laszlo, the girl was Piroska, but I don't know their last name. This bar was in the center of Zamardi, between the Balaton and the railway. My aunt's hash-house was on Aradi Street, on the first alley after the railway station. On Saturday nights, when the relatives came with the bull-train, my uncle always took us to the bar and danced with all the girls. This was the only entertainment at that time.

My uncle had a daughter and a son. His daughter, Julia Vajda, got married, and lived two streets away in Budapest. She ran away from the Obuda brick-factory [4](#) and escaped that way. She got married and her husband disappeared. He was deported, but I don't know where. He didn't survive the deportation. Julia Vajda got married for the second time to Gyorgy Kalman and he raised her son [Peter], who was born from her first marriage. Her son is still alive. My aunt's [Ilona Vajda] son was called Gyorgy Vajda. He was deported at the age of 18.

My father was born around 1885 and died at the age of 85, in the 1970s. He learned the picture framer's trade in Vienna [today Austria]. His parents must have sent him to Vienna. He had a framing shop on Brody Sandor Street, close to the Museum Garden. This shop was closed for a long time, for a couple years perhaps, because it didn't really prosper. I don't remember exactly when he opened it, probably around 1930. I remember that there were frames in the shop window; one could see from that what kind of shop it was. I don't know whether his colleagues were Jewish or not. This framing business lasted for about two-three years, I think. At that time it was customary that the framed picture was sent home, the customer didn't have to come to the shop to get it. And once, when I came home from school, I took a picture to someone's home and they wanted to give me a tip. And I rejected it, saying that I was the boss's daughter. When I came home and told my father he was angry with me, because he told me that it wasn't written on my face who I was and that I had offended the customer by rejecting his tip. I meant good, but it turned out badly.

My father learned accounting at a very young age. I don't know where. He dealt with the tax return and everything related to accounting in all the shops of the family when he was young. The framing business was rather an attempt. My father wanted to have more things to depend on, that's why he opened a shop, because he had the qualification for that. He did the accounting of the framing shop, too, but there he actively took part in the physical work, too. He started accounting much earlier. I remember that my father had done accounting before he opened the shop. I remember that he kept accounts for a merchant called Mor Hahn, who had a hardware store on Ulloi Avenue.

He was drafted into forced labor for a couple months during the war, but I don't know where. Fortunately he came back, and lived through the deportations in Budapest. In the meantime he kept working as an accountant, for very many shops. We lived off that. He didn't work at home, but he always went where he had to do the accounts. He made tax returns and when the Deri Street Carpenter Co-operative was established he became an accountant there. He was already a pensioner when he joined the co-operative.

## Growing up

My parents might have gotten married around 1906. My brother Karoly was born in 1908, and I was born on 22nd May 1915 in the Weiss Alice Hospital. I had another brother besides Karoly, called Jenó. He was born in 1911. He was one and a half years old when he died. He fell ill with pneumonia and at that time there wasn't a cure for it.

My parents' marriage was a good one, but at the beginning there were some differences, especially related to food. I remember one such story, which my father told many times. My father liked cabbage ravioli very much, and my mother made it with kohlrabi instead of cabbage because it was cheaper. But my father didn't like kohlrabi and once he came home at noon, because he used to come home for lunch, and asked what there was for lunch. My mother told him that it was cabbage ravioli. My father didn't believe that it was made with cabbage, came home in the evening and asked again what there was to eat for dinner. Cabbage ravioli, my mother said. This went on for a couple days, then my father went to my mother's mom on Kisdiofa Street, told her what had happened and asked her to go and sort things out. Then my grandmother came, she took the cabbage ravioli, and threw it out. She said, 'Listen up, my girl, you don't have to cook what your husband doesn't like.' And she told my father that he should eat what his wife cooked. That's how she made order.

My father was a very calm, nice man. He never argued; we never got a beating, from my mother neither. My mother was a very kind person. She loved everyone and helped everyone. There was a grocer on Radaay Street, where we lived, who always had the apprentices bring the bigger packages upstairs to our place, so that my mom wouldn't have to lug them. For money of course, but he always sent the apprentice upstairs with it. One of the apprentices came to our place several times, and my mother always bathed him, gave him one of my brothers's clean T-shirts and a pair of socks, and let him go back that way, clean. The grocer always grumbled that it always took a long time for the child to get back when he came to our place. My mother had asthma, and she could only walk on the street in that she covered her mouth with some shawl, because the air made her cough. And this grocer's apprentice informed on her at the police station, saying that she put the shawl to her face in order to cover the yellow star. Then she was taken to the police station. They kept her there for one day, but we don't know what happened to her, because she never talked about it.

My mother was a hairdresser. I don't know when and from whom she learned the trade. At that time she didn't work at a hairdressing saloon, but she went to houses. In the mornings she used to go to comb, because at that time, in the 1920s-1930s, it was in fashion that they put artificial hair among the hair and they combed the original hair on top of it, so that it would stand upwards. She even made a bun for those who didn't have artificial hair. The women couldn't do this alone at home, that's why my mother used to go to them. 'I am going to comb,' she always said. This was a

technical term at that time. Later she worked very much in the brothels of that time. She went there as a hairdresser, because they had money. My mother and her family lived on Bastya Street, and on 29 Magyar Street there was a brothel on the ground floor. The whores were there and there were grates on the windows on the ground floor, so one couldn't climb in or out. My mother used to go there to comb almost every day.

Later, when she got married, we moved to Vamhaz Boulevard and our apartment there had a big room and a small room. My mother furnished the small room as a hairdressing saloon. From then on the customers came there. Most of her customers were from the Great Market Hall, because 10 Vamhaz Boulevard was close to the market place on Vamhaz Boulevard. The wealthy goose merchants and the Jews who dealt with poultry came there from the market. It was very important for them to go to the hairdresser and to bathe on Friday. On Saturday they had to be clean. Only women came to my mother, men and children didn't. Most of them were wealthy Jewish women.

My mother later associated with her sister, Hermina, who had a comforter shop on Raday Street. My mother learned the trade from her. It must have been in 1938 or around that time. The shop was on 15 Raday Street and we also moved there, to 18 Raday Street. From then on my mother was there. The four of us lived here, my mother, my father, my brother and I. I don't know why we moved there, probably because of the shop. We had a big kitchen in this apartment and we also had a bathroom. Besides that there was a small room, a hall and a big room, so we had two rooms altogether.

Hermina married a Roman Catholic man, Peter Gyorffy. They had a child, but he died in his childhood. As a matter of fact Peter opened this shop, and his wife Hermina was a co-owner. Peter had a brother and a sister, who were raised very religiously. My aunt Hermina and her husband lived in a part of Buda that counted as countryside at that time, so they only had the shop on Raday Street. We made excursions to their place on Sundays many times. There was a very nice house with a garden there on Kelenvolgy. We went by tram to the Kelenfold railway station and from there on foot. There wasn't a bus yet at that time.

Both Hermina and her husband came to the shop every day. When my mother also joined they ran the shop together. The shop was in the front, the workshop in the back. The shop also had a loft, they made the comforters there. There was also a shop-window, a comforter was displayed there. They had many customers. Imre Magyari, the leader of a gypsy band also shopped there. I remember the shop, because I worked there for a while after the war, from 1945 until 1950. The shop was closed in 1944, but my mother and I worked here for a short time after the war. On the other side of the shop there was a leather shop, I remember that, too. Hermina got into an old-age home after the war, I used to visit her. She died around 1948-1949. I don't remember when her husband died.

We always had a maid, a household couldn't do without one. She helped my mom with the shopping, cooking and cleaning. Making a fire was also her job. My mom sometimes got hold of them through a domestic servant agency, but mainly through acquaintances. She had many acquaintances, one recommended the other. They were Swabian girls from the Swabian villages around Budapest. They didn't come to our place as maids but as family members. We knew the family, and they wanted us to teach the girl many things: to sew, to darn, to clean. The maids were usually at our place for a year, then they went home to their village, or those who became

pregnant, rather stayed in Pest, because the village would have outcast them. It happened with many, that they became pregnant. There was a maid's room in our house, so the maids lived at our place. My mother handled the maids as if they were her children. She taught them many things and was nice to them. They ate with us, they could use our bathroom, and at holidays they got presents.

Only this kashrut was always a problem. My mother always had a hard time making the maids understand that they shouldn't mix up the dishes, until she got bored with it. Not that they couldn't remember things, but they didn't think that it was a mistake. They didn't do it on purpose I think, but somehow they couldn't remember that it was a religious regulation. Moses introduced this into the religion, he didn't want to make religion, but healthy people, and it is related to health that dairy foods leave the stomach in two hours, so one can only eat greasy ones in two hours. As a matter of fact this is why Jews aren't allowed to eat pork, because that stays in the stomach for the longest time, beef and poultry leave the stomach much faster. The entire religion is based on cleanliness. For example it was forbidden to mix up the milk-pan with the dish for the greasy foods. They had to be washed separately. My mother noticed several times that the milk-pan was in the oven, it wasn't washed. So my mother always bought a new pan. She taught the maid in vain; she always messed up the dishwashing. My mother wanted to manage a kosher household, but then she said that she wasn't going to fool herself. The maid always mixed up the dishes. And so we switched over to Neolog housekeeping. So from then on my grandfather didn't eat anything else at our place but hard boiled eggs.

There was a maid from Torokbalint, I remember her the most. She always wore a national dress, even in Budapest. I also remember that she had many skirts, and we had a very big kitchen on Vamhaz Boulevard, the stone was very nice there, and she always ironed her skirt there. She pinned it down where two stones met, so that it would be fixed nicely. We went everywhere together. If we went to the theater or to the cinema, we took her along. She always came with us, but I always had to help her. To clean the house for example, or when she washed the dishes, I had to dry them.

We ate challah, too, usually on Fridays. The chulent was made in old times so that they prepared it at home, they put poultry, smoked things, hard boiled egg and beans in it. We put it together in a pot and there was a kosher baker on Dob Street, the Jews from the surroundings took it there. The pots were all covered with colored checked cloths, and everyone wrote their name on it. And when the bread was ready in the oven, they put these pots in, too. We went to get it on the next day, on Saturday. We also had to pay for it. [Editor's note: Probably the maid or the children went to pick up the chulent, because an adult Jew is not allowed to carry anything between private property and public place on Saturday. They had to pay in advance or later.]

We had a cockle stove, and there was a hole in the middle, and we baked food there many times. My mother often baked potatoes, layered potatoes, of course without sausage, there was only potato and egg in it. When the cockle stove was turned off, my mother swept the ashes away and put the food there to bake it. Besides the iron door there was another door, which was transparent, and we looked through it to see if the potatoes were done.

I was a picky eater as a child, my mother cooked for me separately. Cold cuts were very expensive at that time, but my mother always bought it me so that I would have something to eat. She

bought 5 decagrams, exactly scaled. I ate very much cod-liver-oil. I remember that we kept it between the windows. There was a spoon in it, we only used that spoon for that, because it smelled and tasted like cod-liver-oil. I had a sweet tooth, I loved chocolate. They sold Meinl's chocolate at that time, which came in a round box, and I got some of this chocolate every time after I ate some cod-liver-oil. I got so much of it that in the end I got pimples because of it.

When I was a child there wasn't as much soap as now. I remember the Albus soap. We washed our hair with bar-soap and rinsed it with vinegar. It made the hair shine beautifully. In the apartment on Vamhaz Boulevard we had a pantry right next to the kitchen. My mother transformed that into a bathroom, there was a tin hip-bath in it, we bathed in that. We warmed the water in a washing pan on the stove and poured it into the tub. On Raday Street we had a normal bathroom, there was a stove in it, too. There was a window between the kitchen and the bathroom, and that always had to be open, because I had to wash my underwear and when my mother cooked she always looked in to see if I washed with soap or with a brush. This might have been when I was twelve. When my brother and I were children, my mother also watched how we bathed, and if I changed my underwear. We always put on clean underwear on Fridays. A washwoman also came, but often the maid did the laundry. There was a laundry room in every house, and a mangle in the staircase, under the stairs. We mangled the clothes, it was easier to iron them this way. There was coal iron and many got a headache from the coal-gas, when the coal wasn't hot enough.

The washing regulations, the ritual baths were important because of two things. Not only because of the religion, but also so that people would bath every week and wash their hair, their eyes and ears, too. This is why in the ritual bath the women went under. This wasn't important only because of religion, but also so that the water would reach everything, so that they would be clean. We didn't go to such a bath, because we had a bathroom. The very religious people thought that this belonged to religion, but many went there to bathe simply because they didn't have a bathroom. My mother used to go to such a bath when she was a girl, but later she didn't. [Editor's note: Since it isn't a regulation that women have to go to the mikveh before getting married, the interviewee's mother perhaps didn't use the ritual bath (the mikveh pool itself), but only the bathing part (shower, tub).] Before the war there was such a bath around Kiraly Street, on Kazinczy Street. There were several of them, there was one on Dohany Street, too.

My mother didn't wear the clothes the religious Jews wore, she was Neolog. My mother was very religious. We always observed the Jewish holidays in my childhood. My mom always made sure we did. She was the most religious person in the family. This wasn't so important for my father. I always went to the synagogue with my mother, because my father wasn't religious. I always had to put on my nicest clothes. I still observe everything I can, for example the New Year [Rosh Hashanah] and the Day of Atonement [Yom Kippur]. I buy a seat ticket for the Dohany Street synagogue, and I regularly go there. I have my own seat. In my childhood my mother used to go, and I went with her. At that time we didn't go to Dohany Street yet. Before the war there were more Jews, and the so-called rented prayer houses existed. We went to Brody Sandor Street on holidays, because there was the Houses of Parliament at the side of the Museum Garden, and we used to go there to pray. [Editor's note: During the High Holidays the big auditorium of the former Houses of Parliament functioned as a temporary place of prayer, in the building on 4 Foherceg Sandor [today Brody Sandor] Street. From 1908, when the number of believers was more than 23,500 on the territory of the district, they also held worship services in two other locations.]



Because one had to buy a seat ticket at that time, too, and the Dohany Street synagogue was too expensive for our budget. That's one of the reasons why we went to the prayer house.

This was the New Year, and ten days later is the Day of Atonement. The fast of the Day of Atonement starts on the evening before, and we light candles for the deceased, and one has to fast from the time the star rises until the next evening, when it rises again. One can't eat, can't even drink water, nothing. The Orthodox Jews fasted so that they didn't go to the synagogue, but they sat at home next to the table, which was set. Many things were piled up on the table, fruits and food, but one wasn't allowed to eat any of it. As a matter of fact fasting is a torture, they tortured themselves meaning that they saw the food, but they couldn't eat it. My parents used to do it this way, too. [Editor's note: Hedvig Endrei might be referring to some local custom. According to the Halachic regulations the believer spends almost all the Yom Kippur at the synagogue.] My cousins were younger, they were allowed to eat. [Editor's note: Children only have to fast an entire day, like the adults, after their bar mitzvah/bat mitzvah/, until then they only fast half a day.] And I had to give them the food, the torture was that they were allowed to eat, and I wasn't. I shouldn't fast anymore, but I still observe it. [Editor's note: The surrender of fast isn't linked to a certain age, but one only has to fast if it doesn't compromise his health in any way. This is why fasting isn't obligatory for children, sick people and the aged.]

Then there was Sukkot, which lasted for 8 days. Four full days of holiday, and four half days: two before it, and two after it. They pitched a sukkah with a straw roof in the courtyard, and lived and ate in it at that time. Now they only eat in it on Dohany Street. When we were children we went to Dohany Street for Sukkot, because in the temporary prayer house on Brody Sandor Street they couldn't put up a sukkah, so we went here. They always distributed challah, too. [Editor's note: In Israel (and among Reform Jews), Sukkot is a 7-day holiday, with the first day celebrated as a full festival with special prayer services and holiday meals. Outside the land of Israel, the first two days are celebrated as full festivals. The remaining days are known as Chol HaMoed (festival weekdays). The seventh day of Sukkot is called Hoshanah Rabbah and has a special observance of its own. The day immediately following Sukkot is a separate holiday known as Shemini Atzeret, "the Eighth (Day) of Assembly." Shemini Atzeret is a separate holiday in respect to six specific issues. However, it is considered part of an eight-day holiday regarding a seventh issue. These issues are explained in the Talmud, Tractate Rosh Hashanah 4b. In Israel, the celebration of Shemini Atzeret includes Simchat Torah. Outside the land of Israel, Shemini Atzeret is celebrated on the day after Sukkot and Simchat Torah is celebrated on the day after that, bringing the total days of festivities to eight in Israel and nine outside Israel. (Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sukkot>)]

We also held the seder. This holiday [Pesach] commemorates when the Jews were driven out from Egypt and wandered in the desert, where they couldn't cook. The matzah originates from then, because there wasn't enough time for the leavened bread to rise and there wasn't enough time to bake it. They baked it in the sand; it was made of flour, water and salt. [Editor's note: The matzah wasn't baked in the sand during the wandering, but in the kitchen in Egypt. And there wasn't enough time for it to rise, because the Jews had to run away from Egypt so quickly, that they didn't have time to let it rise.] Before the holiday we always had to do housecleaning. At Pesach we cooked in different pots than on the other days, and we did housecleaning, because we had to get rid of every crumb of bread and leavened cookies in every corner. One could only begin Pesach that way.

Seder at our place was celebrated so that on the first night we sat around the table at dinner. The one leading the prayer sat at the head of the table, this was usually my father. There were two pillows on his armchair, behind his back, and he had to eat reclining on them. The dinner was a hard boiled egg, clear soup with matzah balls in it. And there was also tomato sauce and the so-called hremzli. Hremzli is something like a doughnut and it is made of matzah flour. Matzah flour, lemon juice, walnut, sugar and egg were needed to make it. My mother made it often. [Editor's note: Pesach hremzli is a food made of grated potatoes and egg, seasoned with salt and pepper, and fried in hot oil. Instead of potatoes it can be made with matzah flour, instead of pepper it can be seasoned with lemon, nut, and sugar can be put on the latter kinds.] Out of this [i.e. matzah flour] we also made matzah cake. One wasn't allowed to eat bread for 8 days. My father and my mother weren't really religious, they used to go somewhere else to eat bread, but my mother didn't allow bread to be brought to the apartment. [Editor's note: In Israel, Passover is a 7-day holiday, with the first and last days celebrated as a full festival (involving abstention from work, special prayer services and holiday meals). In the Jewish diaspora outside Israel, the holiday is traditionally celebrated for 8 days (although Reform Jews celebrate for 7 days), with the first two days and last two days celebrated as full festivals. The intervening days are known as Chol HaMoed ("festival weekdays"). (Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Passover>)]

We also made a seder plate at every Pesach. This was a big plate with a long-shaped napkin, which we folded in three and put three whole pieces of matzah in each part. [Editor's note: The three pieces of matzah covered with a napkin stand for the three parts of Israel: Cohen, namely Aron's descendants, Levi's descendants and Yisrael, the rest of Israel's children.] At the end of one of the prayers one had to break a piece, the one that was in the middle, and my father hid it between the two pillows, and the youngest one sitting at the table had to steal it. At the end of a certain prayer one had to break off a piece of this and give a tiny little piece to those sitting at the table. But if the matzah had been stolen, they couldn't do so and since the youngest child only gave it back if he got something for it, they had to promise him a present. A pair of shoes or a suit for the youngest one, and he had to get it by all means.

Besides the three pieces of matzah there was also a goose or duck neck baked in ash, salty water in a dish, parsley in it, in a bowl or mug there was walnut, wine and apple mixed together and egg, this represented that the Jews wandered in the desert, baked their bread in the ash, and the goose or duck neck baked in ash symbolized this. [Editor's note: The meat baked or rather burned in the ash symbolizes the lamb, which they slaughtered at the time of the exodus from Egypt, and respectively the sacrificial lamb, which they sacrificed at Pesach every year until the Tabernacle was demolished.] The salty water meant the tears, the matzah, the apple, the wine and the walnut meant the mortar, which they used to glue the stones together and build houses. They built houses for themselves besides the tent, where they could live later.

It was always my father who read the text [Haggadah], and I know that my uncle and my aunt were often there. One of my uncles was only interested in the dinner, and my father had to get to page 33 in his book before we could eat. The story of them having dinner was there. And my uncle always sat next to me and he kept poking at me and asking when the dinner was going to start. There was hard boiled egg before dinner, one had to eat that, and then soup. My father read in Hungarian, though he knew a little Hebrew.

We always invited my friend, a neighbor, she was called Gabriella Grosz. We were born approximately at the same time, and we grew up in the same house. She wasn't Jewish, her parents were very Catholic, but she was my best friend. I always spent Christmas Eve at their place, and she spent Easter at ours. Jewish Easter was at the same time as the Christian one many times, so we often ate ham and matzah in secret. At Christmas we decorated the Christmas tree together, and there was always a gift for me under the Christmas tree. It was customary to give chocolate as a present. The Szerencsi chocolate factory already made good chocolate at that time. I always got that chocolate from them for Christmas. This was a thick bar of chocolate, long-shaped. It lasted for almost a year.

There was a morning prayer and an afternoon prayer at the synagogue. At noon there was a break, and that's when the Torah scroll was read. It means that they read the Torah scroll and the wealthy give donations to the hospital, the school or the orphanage. We didn't have much money, but sometimes we also donated. [Editor's note: At Pesach, like on other holidays there is a morning prayer (sahrit) and an extra holiday prayer (muszaf) in the morning and in the afternoon. The afternoon prayer (minha) and the evening prayer (maariv) are early in the evening. The afternoon prayer can be said half an hour after midday until sunset, but in practice it is usually held together with the evening prayer so that one only has to go to the synagogue twice, so the two are held late in the afternoon. Torah scroll reading is at the end of the morning prayer (sahrit), and during the afternoon prayer (minha), but the interviewee probably refers to the morning prayer, because that is the more important and longer one, people usually donate at that time. She thought it was at noon, because on holidays the morning prayer can be longer.]

My grandparents lived on 3 Kisdiofa Street, and on Sunday afternoons the program was that we went to visit Grandma with Mom, and my father always went to Muzeum Cafe, which was on the corner of Muzeum Boulevard and Brody Sandor Street. He waited for us there, this was his Sunday recreation. He always drank a small coffee there and he got a glass of water with it. Small coffee was the cheapest coffee. He always read the papers. We didn't subscribe to any newspapers, that's why my father went to the cafe. I remember, he read 'Friss Ujsag' [Fresh News- newspaper with a great circulation, published from 1896 until 1944; it was especially popular in the country]. And there was the 'Kepes Ujsag' [Magazine], I liked to leaf through it, too. On the way back from my grandmother, we told him that we were there. It happened once that we met our dentist, to whom my mother took me, because my teeth were quite bad. The dentist lived on 9 Vamhaz Boulevard, on the first floor. My mother once took me there, paid a certain amount in advance, and told him that she would pay it all once he had finished. She asked him to discuss it with me when I could go there, but I never went. He also sat in the cafe once, and my mother went up to him and asked him if he had been making progress with my teeth. He said that he hadn't seen the child. That's when I was caught. I got a beating, not a too bad one, though, and from then on my mother always came with me.

I went to nursery school, elementary and middle school on Papnevelde Street, downtown. The children were mixed at the nursery school and at school, too. Since we were Neolog, there was no point in us going to an Orthodox school. My brother went to Eotvos High School on Realtanoda Street. When he graduated from high school he wanted to go to university, he would have liked to become a doctor. But then the numerus clausus [5](#) took effect. [Editor's note: When Hedvig Endrei's brother graduated from high school, approximately in 1926, the numerus clausus had been

effectual for 6 years already.] Jews couldn't go to university, and then he was apprenticed to an upholsterer. He was apprenticed to a very famous upholsterer, whose shop opened to Jozsef Nador Square. He was a renowned master. My brother also became a very good professional, and since he couldn't go to university and had to learn a trade, my parents saved up some money and sent him to Paris for a year. He was already an upholsterer at that time. When he came home he opened a comforter and tapestry shop on 2 Podmaniczky Street. My brother magyarized his name to Vajda sometime between 1925 and 1930.

I completed four classes of middle school. This was a mixed school. Quite a lot of Jewish children went there. They always mocked me at school, even the religion teacher did, that I was the odd one out, because I was blond. I had always been blond, and Jews are usually black-haired. They mocked me by telling me that I wasn't a real Jew. The Catholics and the Jewish children had religion class separately. We learned Hebrew at school, because religion class was compulsory at that time. That's where I learned to read. I knew it [to read in Hebrew] at that time, but the prayer books are different now. There was school on Saturdays, but on Sundays there wasn't. They never had school on Saturdays at the other Jewish schools. There was school on Sunday afternoon instead, but it wasn't so at our school.

I remember the needlework teacher, she was the homeroom-teacher, too; she has already dead. I did a lot of needlework, because my mother's mania was that one shouldn't just sit around, but always do something, sew, darn or do handcrafts. And I always crocheted and knitted. I crocheted small table-cloths, because at that time dinner trays, on which they brought in the coffee-set if guests came, were in fashion. They put this cloth between two sheets of glass, had it framed, and it had two metal handles. They put a crocheted cloth on the nightstand, too. The wardrobe had a triple mirror, under the mirror there was the shelf, where they put the toiletries. On top of the nightstand there was a sheet of glass, and they put a cloth under it. I always crocheted or knitted those. In one half-year I failed the needlework class, and my mother rushed to the school and asked the teacher why she failed me, who else did so much needlework and made such beautiful things. The teacher said that because I didn't make the specified amount. I wasn't bad, but it wasn't enough.

In my childhood my parents went to the National Theater quite often, and I went with them. The National [Theater] was close to our place. We always sat on the gods. I often went to the balustrade, because I saw better from there. At that time Kalman Rozsahegyi, the actor with a husky voice still played. [Editor's note: Kalman Rozsahegyi (1873-1961) - actor, drama teacher. From 1909 until 1961 he ran an actor training school, where many significant actors studied.] They played the 'Piros bugyellaris' [The Red Purse, 1877 play by Ferenc Csepreghy (1842-1880)] and such like. Once I was at the Vigszinhaz [Comedy Theater] with them.

They organized every year at some point the so-called International Fair, here in Budapest. [The first fair was held under this name in 1925.] I remember that my father and my brother and I went there every year. I remember that I was already a grown-up, about 20-25 years old, and we still went there. Until the beginning of 1940 we did for sure. I'm not sure whether I used to go as a child, too, or not, but since I was a teenager I sure did. We went to the fair every year, because we had friends through my father and the comforter shop of my mother's brother, who had stalls there. We always went to see them. I remember that advertising leaflets were handed out. Many people collected those at that time, I did, too. I didn't collect napkins or buttons, but advertising

leaflets. For example the framer Hoffmann, who was here on Karoly Boulevard and was my father's customer, was always here, too. He always gave me a small mirror, comb or pen. It was fun for me to collect these. I exchanged them with my friends, and we discussed what everyone got. If I didn't go for some reason, my father brought me all kinds of advertisement gadgets.

In the 1920s and 1930s it was in fashion to go to the Budapest promenade on Saturdays and Sundays. There were hotels all along the bank of the Danube, each of them had a terrace on the street side, and gypsy bands often played there. One could meet acquaintances, friends there. One could also make acquaintance with people there. My mother and I often went for a walk on the promenade after synagogue on Saturdays, and we carried the prayer books in our hands. My mother always wrapped the prayer book in a white cloth and carried it like that. We always made sure to be home by about 12 to 1 o'clock. At that time the promenade was empty, and in the afternoon it became populated again. We often went out on Sundays, too, or at least I went with friends or my brother to listen to the leader of the gypsy band, to pass the time. There was an iron balustrade at the promenade, where the tram no. 2 goes now. We sat there and listened to Imre Magyari, the leader of the gypsy band. He was also our customer at the comforter shop.

I also remember that we, young girls used to go to the Muzeum Garden to meet boys. We always had to dress very elegantly. It was in fashion at that time that the tights, the gloves, the hat and the shoes had to be of the same color. My friend's beau was a famous film director. He was a very handsome boy, with blond curly hair and he always wore navy corduroys and shirt. He wasn't Jewish. She was my best friend on Vamhaz Boulevard, she was my friend for 23 years. Then, when I came back from deportation, I met her on Kalvin Square, when I was on my way to be disinfected, and I went towards her with great joy, but she turned her head away and walked past me. She married Zoltan Kiralydaroczi, who came from a very distinguished family, the Kiralydaroczi family. In their apartment a certificate attesting their nobility, which was made of some kind of skin, was hung up. Later they divorced. She immigrated to London. Her brother had defected and had her sister and daughter brought there. I was at her place in London for a month in the 1960s, because we later made up and corresponded, too. My friend died of a heart attack; her daughter is still alive.

I often went out with my brother and his friends. In the 1930s my brother had a boat-house on the Romai bank. At that time boat houses on the Danube that one could buy were in fashion. We usually spent the summer there. This was a way of having fun at that time. It was very nice. We went for a row, the boys went fishing, and we had fun. One could sleep there, but we usually went there in the morning and came back in the evening. There was an apartment in the boat-house, with four rooms overlooking the shore, and four rooms overlooking the water. Every room had a separate tenant. Next to the building there was the boat garage, and the boats were there. Everyone had a boat, we had a kayak. There was also a balcony and shower in the boat-house. There wasn't a kitchen, but we cooked on a heater. We often fried fish. We coated the small fish the boys caught with flour and paprika and fried it. I didn't like it, but the boys did. At that time the Duna bathing establishment also existed. There were two Duna bathing establishments between Ferenc Jozsef Bridge and Erzsebet Bridge, one for men and one for women. My brother learned to swim there. We also went on hikes in the mountains around Budapest. We always went on Sundays. At these occasions we also picnicked.

It was fashionable before the war that a dressmaker came to our place for three days. She came every year, usually in the winter. She didn't sleep at our place, but she came in the morning and left in the evening. Then she darned everything that got ripped during the year, for example towels, sheets, she made one sheet out of two etc. She was paid for this and got breakfast, lunch and dinner, too. I always helped this dressmaker with overstitching. We sewed a so-called dress with her, I remember, which consisted of a top, a pleated skirt, and it also had an apron.

In old times every girl had to be good at music, even if she wasn't a professional musician. Usually one had to be good at everything: cooking, cleaning, needlework, darning, had to know how to darn underwear, and we also had to be familiar with music. That's why my mother sent me to piano classes. I went to play the piano every Tuesday afternoon, to a teacher on Erkel Street. I learned to play the piano for four years, and I had a piano on Raday Street, but when they assigned the yellow star houses [6](#), ours didn't become one, and there was no space for the piano where we moved, so it was left behind. It was a big piano, not a cottage piano. It wasn't a good brand piano, we didn't have enough money for that.

My aunt Hermina's parents, whose husband was a Christian, were very religious. Her parents lived in Baja. The Gyorffy family had a dry cleaner's in Baja; they cleaned the nun's dresses from the nunnery. They starched the habit of the nuns, because this required special proficiency, it could only be cleaned at the dry cleaners. They had three children, two boys and a girl. They wanted the girl to be a nun, but she didn't join the sisterhood. One of the boys became a priest, he moved to Zirc, and he wore a white cassock. He also learned music, he learned to play the violin. If he came to visit us, I always had to play the piano. We had a tile stove at that time and there was a sheet of iron in front of it. The piano was set up in front of it so that my hands wouldn't be cold, because the keys of the piano were cold, and I remember that this priest came and he watched me play, and his cassock touched this sheet of iron by accident and it got burned. We were very upset because of it, but he told us not to worry because he would get another one.

After graduating from middle school I went to the so-called bride school [household school] for a year. There we learned how to budget the money, the income. Besides this there was also a sewing and cooking course. We learned to bake strudel, and to cook, and we invited the children who went to school and the teachers, too. I went to the bride school with Theodora Palavicini, who had to be at home by 1 o'clock every day, by the time her father got home, so that the entire family could eat together. A car with a driver came to pick her up, but this didn't bother us at all, we considered it a natural thing, we didn't mock her for being so distinguished. She dressed in a simple way, she didn't want to attract attention. I don't know where they lived, perhaps around the Buda Castle, because they came by car. They were very wealthy. But she worked just like we did. I was 15 years old at that time, and then my first occupation was milliner.

I learned the milliner trade partly at school. The milliner school might have been about two years, but I don't remember exactly. I also learned many things in my aunt's shop, I learned the trade there for real. My aunt had a milliner's shop on 2 Vamhaz Boulevard. I spent a lot of time there, I liked going there. From the time I was four my mother always sent me to the shop when she was busy. So I spent a lot of time there, and my father told me that if I liked to go there that much, I should at least learn the trade. My aunt was called Frida Reich, but she used the name Frici, because she was advised that as a merchant she should use a fancy name that sounded well. On the shop it was written: Hungarian Royal and Imperial Supplier - Frici Reich. This was written on the

hat-boxes, too.

The shop consisted of a square hall. The mirrors and the leather armchairs were to the right. The counter was also there. The hat-boxes, which were 60 by 40 centimeter boxes, were to the left. The workshop was in the back. There were long tables inside, which had an edge at the bottom, we put our feet up there. There were hat-blocks made of wood up on the table. At that time hats made of felt were in fashion, which were covered with silk. They put the damp felt on the hat-block and let it dry there. They sewed the edge of the hat with a separate sewing machine; this was the first job of the apprentices. I started this way, too, and I liked doing this with the sewing machine very much. Aunt Frici had six employees. They started to work at 8 in the morning, but Aunt Frici only came in at 11, and the hats were already standing there, so that she could start decorating them. She lived in a very nice house with a garden and she went to the shop by taxi every day. She usually put lace on the hats, but at that time the cherry decoration, for example, was also fashionable. The decorating of the ready hats was one of the most 'noble' parts of hat making. They always delivered the hats; Aunt Frici employed footmen for this job.

I remember that Archduchess Augusta [wife of Joseph August Viktor Klemens Maria, Archduke of Austria, Prince of Hungary and Bohemia (1872–1962)] also shopped in Aunt Frici's shop, and at these times they made a big fuss to receive her. My aunt Frici put on a white lace apron and she recommended the hats herself. She didn't do this for other customers, there was a saleswoman to do so. The archduchess arrived with an English car from the Var, with a driver of course, and Frici's husband, who was called Pal Erdos and also worked in the shop, received her at the door. My aunt opened this shop when she was a girl, and she didn't change the name of the shop after she got married. They lay down a red coconut carpet, too, but that was only for very distinguished customers. The archduchess wore hat size 63, I remember that. When she tried on the hats I was allowed to watch from the counter.

After learning the milliner trade I learned to sew for a year from a widow and her daughter, who was a spinster. I might have been around 17-18 years old at that time. They lived on Magyar Street and I used to go there to learn to sew. This was a seamstress who took on teaching time by time, but it wasn't a course. I learned from her alone. My mother knew this woman from somewhere, that's how I got to her. I learned to overstitch the dresses, to sew in the sleeve, to do needlework, in short, things, which couldn't be sewed with a sewing machine. My mother paid for this sewing course, and I also got a snack there. I was there from 9 in the morning until 1 every day, then in the winter I went to the Markus skating rink to skate, then my mother came to pick me up. The Markus skating rink was on Rakoczi Avenue, across the Astoria, I used to go there with my friends.

Since the milliner trade meant that I had to sit, and I was always gastralgic, my father organized me a job at the Hahn Mor hardware store, on 101 Ulloi Avenue. They also had a store on Thek Endre Street, which was one of the backstreets of Soroksari Avenue, and I got a job there as a cashier: the cash-desk was arranged so that one didn't have to sit but stand; there was a push-button cash-register. I might have been about 18 years old. I was at the hardware store for a year, maybe more. Then I joined my brother, because he got his own store on Podmaniczky Street, and for that I had to learn comforter making. I got married at the age of 26, and I went to the duvet making school right before that. I met my husband the following way: I worked at my uncle Jenő Reich's on 17 Rakoczi Avenue, his hat shop was much smaller than Aunt Frici's. His brother courted one of my colleagues, and he introduced me to my future husband. We were dating for seven

years.

My husband, Istvan Endrei, was born in Budapest in 1914, but he lived in Debrecen with his parents. He was of Jewish origin but he was raised as a Roman Catholic. His father magyarized his name from Edelstein, my husband was already Endrei. My father-in-law was called Laszlo Endrei, my mother-in-law was Katalin Roth. My husband's father died in World War I. My mother-in-law remarried and remained in Debrecen with her second husband. I was at their place once after our wedding. My mother-in-law's second husband had a clothing and underwear shop in Debrecen. He was in business until 1944. Imre Endrei was my husband's brother. He was a clerk here in Budapest. They lived on Nagykörút [Grand Boulevard], opposite the Nyugati railway station. He didn't have any children, just a wife. I know about them that everyone in the family was a teacher. His wife was also a teacher. Imre fell sick and his wife made him work, and she had to pay dearly for it: Imre died of pneumonia. Two sons were born from my mother-in-law's second marriage, too, but I only remember Laci [Laszlo]. Laci kept in touch with my husband, he sometimes came to Pest to go out. Laci was deported with his mother from Debrecen, and they never came back. They died in deportation, I don't know exactly where. I don't know anything about the other boy.

My husband moved from Debrecen to Budapest quite early, where one of his uncles took care of him. The uncle's last name was Foldes, his wife Etel was the sister of my husband's father. They wanted to adopt my husband, but his parents didn't let them. They treated him as if he was their child. They had a sick child, but he was in a mental institution. They loved my husband very much. They cared very much for him. They were shot into the Danube [7](#). Margit Brody was the third sister of my husband's father. She had a gambling saloon at the corner of Nador Street and Szalai Street. There was a cafe there, and this gambling saloon was in its basement. At that time there were gambling saloons where people played rummy and other games. They were also Jewish. Her husband, Istvan Brody, was the director of the Opera House, their daughter became an actress. [Editor's note: Istvan Brody (1882-1941) also worked as a director in several other theaters.]

My husband was a professional seed examiner at the Corn Exchange. This meant that people brought wheat or some kind of produce to sell at the Corn Exchange, and he controlled the produce they had in their sacks. They put a long pipe with a hollow end into the sack, and a certain amount of the grain fell into it, and there was a hole on the upper end of the pipe, and he examined of what quality the grain was. He determined whether the produce was first class, second class etc., and how much could be paid for it. His uncle organized him this specialty course, because he also worked at the Corn Exchange. This uncle was hip-shot, he walked with difficulty, but he also went to the Corn Exchange every day. Their apartment was very close. And the Corn Exchange was where the television is now. That was the Corn Exchange Hall.

### **During the war**

I got married in 1941. I only had a civil marriage, because my husband was Roman Catholic and I am Jewish. We made an agreement that our children to be born would be Jewish. That's how my mother was willing to give her consent to the marriage. She was terribly sad, because she would have liked a big wedding at the Dohány Street Synagogue [8](#), and it wasn't possible. When I got married I moved to Karoly Boulevard, and I still live here. When I got married I would have liked to live separately with my husband and I was looking for an apartment. My mother put slips of paper on the gates and trees saying that 'anyone who gets hold of an apartment for my daughter, gets



two comforters.' My brother often went to play Bridge and he found out at a game of cards that this apartment on Karoly Boulevard was for rent. A woman, who was friends with the janitor, asked if she would get the comforters in case she got hold of an apartment. My brother said, 'if we would give them to a stranger, why shouldn't we give them you? We have known each other for a long time.' Then she called me in the shop on Podmaniczky Street, saying that I should tell Karoly to go and see the apartment on Karoly Boulevard. We went there, saw it and my brother said that it was big enough and we should rent it. We had to pay three month's rent in advance. This was in April 1941.

From 1942 it was difficult to find a maid or a washwoman, because the men were at the front and the women went to work in the factories. We had to help with the housework, especially with ironing. Washing lasted for two days at our house, because there were many of us. Later one couldn't find a maid at all. From then on we did everything ourselves.

My husband was called up right after our wedding. He had to go to Godollo. He was a cadet, but they had him change his clothes there and deported him from Godollo. One of my cousins met him at the end of April 1942 and gave him some underwear; we don't know what happened to him after that. I have a notification issued by the Red Cross in 1943, saying that he was missing. Then I got the death certificate, he died in Zhytomyr [today Ukraine]. We didn't have any children, because we didn't live together even a year. After I became a widow I preferred to stay at my mother's, but I often came to my own apartment, so that they wouldn't rent it to someone else.

A textile merchant called Kaufmann, who later magyarized his name to Kiraly, owned the house where I moved. The entire house was theirs. There was a porter at the gate and there was a red coconut carpet from the gate up to the mezzanine; it was easy to sweep it, to clean it, and the carpet was fixed with brazen bars, so that if someone stepped on it, it wouldn't slip. The house had a janitor, who polished the door handles and cleaned the carpet every morning. He was deported to Auschwitz, but he came back and was almost 100 years old when he died. I rented the apartment from him at that time. During the war there was a closed corridor on every floor, with glass windows and doors. When the windows broke during the war, they collected the frames, which were made of iron, in the campaign called 'Collect the Iron.' That's why it couldn't be fixed, though the glass was also very nice. [Editor's note: The iron collecting campaign started after the war, around 1950. It was almost obligatory for middle school and high school students to take part in the iron collecting.]

The old Kaufmann had died, I only met his wife. She was in fact the owner of the house and the shop and one of his sons, Jenő Kiraly, worked with her. Jenő had a confection manufactory on the mezzanine, where they made clothes and fur-coats, and the show-room was on the street side. It was a very elegant shop, they only worked on commission. They had many foreign customers, who came here to see the displayed clothes and ordered on the basis of that. They also had models. The office was under the balcony, and the showroom was on the street side. Kaufmann's other son was Dezső Kiraly, who became a humorist and a writer. [Kiraly, Dezső (1896–1966): writer, humorist, sportswriter, he reported on the 1924 Paris Olympics, between 1927 and 1948 he wrote many books on sports.]. One of their daughters, Bozsi, married a bank clerk. Their other daughter was Manci Kaufmann; she married a bookseller, who had a bookshop on Múzeum Boulevard. They lived on Múzeum Boulevard, too. [Editor's note: Manci Kaufmann was probably Béla Rozsnyai's wife. Béla's father, Karoly Rozsnyai opened his second-hand bookshop in 1889; after his death, his

two sons, Bela and Robert, who had worked with him, took over.]

There was one apartment on every floor originally. The old Kaufmann couple lived on the third floor. The lawyer of the house lived on the second floor. He was also Jewish. Bozsi Kiraly lived on the first [floor]. The Kaufmanns decided to divide the floors when the old owner died and their daughter Mancsi moved. There was no point in keeping such big apartments. When I came here there were several apartments on each floor. Jenő Kiraly was a very kind man, and when they divided up the house they made one-bedroom apartments in the back part of the house, where the employees of the shop lived, and the bigger apartments were on the street side. Every employee got an apartment here, and they didn't have to pay rent for a year. But during that time they had to settle in. Jenő checked whether they had bought furniture or not, and if they hadn't, they had to pay the rent for the previous year. The old Mrs. Kaufmann remained on the third floor with her son. The janitor, Aranka [Szollosi], lived on the second floor, right next to the lawyer. The door-keeper lived on the ground floor.

When yellow star houses were introduced, the Sarkany family moved into the lawyer's apartment, because the lawyer had died. The Lukacs family lived on the first floor; they were my neighbors. They had already lived here when I moved in. Margit Lukacs was everyone's godmother here, because she wasn't Jewish. Many thought that if they converted they would escape deportation. She arranged conversion for everyone who asked. And she hid many things for many people: prayer books, candle holders for example, everything that was related to Jewry. She preserved many Jewish treasures this way. Her husband was a dental technician, which will be of importance later. She died of cancer, not long after the war. Another woman lived on the first floor. We weren't friends before, only when the curfew [9](#) was introduced we met on the balcony to talk in the evenings.

When the orders started Dezső [Kiraly] had to move to his sister's within two hours, because they moved here the families from Kispest, Újpest and its environs, who had allegedly been bombed. The house was hit by a bomb because of them, as they wanted to demonstrate that even though they lived in a yellow star house, they weren't Jews, and put a blind on the window and sewed a big cross on it. They got the first proof shot of course. Dezső lived at Mancsi's. We helped him move, because he had very many books. The inhabitants all helped so that the furniture and everything could be carried out quickly. Jenő was too old, and he wasn't deported. Bozsi and her husband immigrated to France after 1945. They somehow escaped, I don't know how. They came back from France, because they had opened a restaurant somewhere, but things didn't really go well, and when things had settled there, they came back. Rozsnyai didn't survive, Mancsi lived on Szász Karoly Street in Buda; she died there. Aunt Kaufmann was old and died, but Jenő got married after the war and he ran the shop. He had a son, he was six when he emigrated with his mother, because his mother's family lived in the USA. He now lives in Switzerland. Jenő died at the age of 70 something. I don't know what happened with Dezső.

The 19th of March 1944 [10](#) was a Sunday. In the morning I went over to my mom's for lunch. I remember that the city was very quiet, and people said that the Germans had come in. That's when the war started for us for real. Soon after that they designated the yellow star houses. This house on Karoly Boulevard also became one, so my parents moved to our place, because theirs wasn't [a yellow star house]. My mother, my aunt who had the comforter shop and my father moved here. Our house was quite unified, and in the evenings, since there was a curfew and we

couldn't leave the house, everyone brought his cricket, and we gathered here, on the balcony. We discussed the daily events here. [Editor's note: The curfew was introduced after the establishment of the yellow star houses: from the end of June 1944 one could leave these houses only between determined hours.]

They introduced the wearing of the yellow star on the 5th April 1944, so on the 6th April we were only allowed to go out on the street with the yellow star [11](#) sewed up. That's how we pulled through this period; it was quite difficult of course when we had to go out on the street with this discriminating sign. But one could get used to everything. At 5 in the afternoon one couldn't leave the house anymore, and here on the third floor lived an Arrow Cross [12](#) chief and his family; he was the commander of the 5th precinct Arrow Cross house, which was on 6 Semmelweis Street. He was sentenced to 15 years of prison. I was at the court as a witness. After 15 years he was released and joined the communist party. His wife was so nice that when she went shopping to the market she came to our place and asked my mom what we needed. After the war she divorced him, they didn't stay together.

When the first bombings took place in Budapest [13](#), they started to take us, young people from the yellow star houses, for debris cleaning. They bombed Soroksari Avenue and the Fanto factory [Editor's note: Fanto United Hungarian Mineral Oil Factories co.] They took us in groups. A young man came for us, he wasn't Jewish, he gathered many young people, took us to Soroksary Avenue by streetcar and on foot, and we had to pile up the bricks from the bombed houses, and had to scrape the mortar off them, so that they could be reused for construction. He came to get us every morning, and brought us back in the evening.

On 9th November 1944 they gathered us, young people, and took us to Szerb Street, where the Serbian church was, and then the police was there. They jammed us into a small room, so that we could only stand. They took us to the KISOK estate [14](#) from there, and then to the Obuda brick factory. On the first day we weren't transported from the Obuda brick factory, so we went home. The janitor here went to the police station to report that I had run away, even though we had been sent home. On the next morning we had to go back to the KISOK field, they took us to the Obuda brick factory again, and then we went to Kophaza from there, which is near Sopron, on foot [see Death marches to Hegyeshalom] [15](#). This was a forced labor camp. We walked on foot for a week during the daytime, and in the evenings we had to sit or lay down where we were, and then continue on our way in the morning. Many times we woke up and saw that we had slept in the place of a cow herd. We couldn't even wash our hands for a week, or take off our clothes or our coat. When I was taken away, my parents sent my neighbor, a dental technician called Imre Lukacs, who wasn't Jewish, after me. There were yellow star houses on the banks of the Danube, which were under Swedish protection [16](#). My parents got hold of a 'Schutzpass' [17](#). This paper meant that I was under Swedish protection. And they sent this Imre after me, so that I could come home from there, but he didn't find me.

In Kophaza they took us to work, to dig entrenchments, stepped entrenchments, the Hungarians thought that the Russian tanks would go into the entrenchments and wouldn't be able to come out. At that time we didn't know that we were digging the entrenchments for ourselves, too. There were some, who died there already. I had an acquaintance in Kophaza, the son of my mother's girlfriend. I was already very thin and in a bad shape at that time. He came to visit me every day, because I had known him from earlier. One day we found him dead, down in the entrenchment. When I came

back, my mother's girlfriend always came, because she knew that we were together, and came to ask if I knew anything about him. My mother told me not to tell the truth. The woman kept coming. Once my mom had enough of it and told her not to keep asking me, because she made me remember things over and over again. She never asked about her son again. It was horrible. The woman was called Lori, I don't know her real name anymore. They had been friends with my mother since their childhood.

In Kophaza we could get food, too, because those who had money could buy some from the villagers. I had a sleeping bag. My brother was an upholsterer and a comforter maker; he gave me that sleeping bag. He made many of those by the way. I had never used it before, but my brother suspected what was awaiting us, and he thought that a sleeping bag would be nice and warm. We made them for excursionists originally. It had a zipper and it was stitched. My brother and my parents sewed 100 pengoes into the stitched squares thinking that I might be able to use it. I bought apples and fruit for it in Kophaza, of which I gave the others, too, of course. We sewed the money into the sleeping bag by hand.

SS officers with brown and black uniform guarded us in Sopron. There was a deportee, who had a leather coat. Whenever the SS officer saw him, he hit him, because he liked the sound the leather coat made. He hit him with a horsewhip. The man was so afraid when he saw this officer that he tried to hide. Someone from among the Jews told this man to turn the leather coat inside out, so that the silk lining would be on the outside. The German ran up and down the entrenchment the next day, he was looking for the man in the leather coat. Because of the silk lining, he couldn't tell which one it was. He never hurt him again. When they bombed Kophaza and Sopron we weren't allowed to work, but we had to sit on the steps of the entrenchment. The German SS officers hid between the bushes, so that they wouldn't be hurt, and we sat in the open air. So we watched from there how the Sopron railway station was bombed. [Editor's note: Sopron was hit by a severe air raid on 6th December 1944.] It didn't even occur to us that a bomb could have hit us, too.

From Kophaza they took us to Wiener Neustadt [today Austria], then to Lichtenwörth in Austria. We walked for one week. There wasn't any possibility to wash ourselves. We went to the toilet wherever we could. In the meantime they watched us. In Lichtenwörth they took us to a factory. We slept on the floor in two big rooms. There were five of us girlfriends and we stuck together. Eva was an upholsterer's wife, I came back with her later, then there was a girl from the country, Magda, and Klari. Klari was a model at Klara Rotschild's milliner's shop. [Editor's note: Klara Rotschild (1903-1976) - fashion designer, opened a milliner's shop in 1934.] Unfortunately I don't remember the name of the fifth girl, but I know that she lived on Pozsonyi Avenue.

We got to know each other better in Kophaza. In the 'Lager' [camp] we tried to stick together. We decided to be together on our blankets laid on the floor. Everyone had one. We didn't take any books along, only clothes, a blanket, a mess-tin and a comb. When we left here we prepared ourselves as soldiers. We took mess-tins and tableware with us. We needed the mess-tin, but we didn't need the tableware. There was coffee, and there were soups mainly. We could eat what we had brought from home. If someone didn't have even a glass, the other one helped her. There wasn't anything there.

We always sat on a blanket, and I had a cardigan, which we undid. I didn't miss the undone cardigan, because I had a winter coat, at that time they didn't really let us outside the building, and

we weren't cold inside. This was my idea because I could knit. I had been doing needlework since my childhood; I did such things with pleasure. We made a knitting needle out of wood; perhaps I had a pocket-knife, too. Everyone got a piece and we knitted. It was just an idea, it didn't really have a point; we just did it for fun, to pass the time. In Lichtenwörth we didn't work, only in Kophaza. We helped each other when we washed ourselves, too, when we stood in line to wash, comb ourselves and get ready.

We got barely any food. We distributed the bread so that we stuck a nail into the middle, and with string and chalk we marked and then cut it. We put the bread under our pillows, so that nobody would steal it. I don't know who had chalk. Eva did this. The piece of bread was like a slice of cake. We ate so that the five of us put a blanket on the straw and ate there. It was animal instinct that they stole each other's food, because that happened, too. Many times we heard someone cry that her bread had been stolen. They didn't really steal anything else, as far as I remember.

I had a sleeping bag, I slept in it. Right next to me slept a man who helped delivering the food in Lichtenwörth. He went to get the food with a truck, along with others. I don't know from where they brought it, but in the morning we got coffee in the mess-tin, and some kind of soup in the afternoon. We agreed that he could sleep there, because I had a sleeping bag, and the bag was closed on that side, besides that we kept his place tidy as we could, and we got an extra mess-tin of food for that. That's how we helped each other, because we took care of him. He could get food more easily there. I don't know what happened to him later.

It often happened that an air raid started and the cars had to stop, and they could only continue their way with the food in the evening. Many times they woke us up at midnight and gave us the soup then, and everyone got diarrhea because of it.

The five of us wrote a cookbook in the camp. The cookbook was made because the five of us women, who became friends there, were all housewives and we regularly cooked. In Lichtenwörth we were very hungry already, we always talked about food. I took writing-paper along and envelopes and a pencil, thinking that I would write home. That's why I had it, and they hadn't taken it, and so we wrote the recipes on this writing-paper. Every one of us dictated simple recipes, which we had made at home, how much flour, how much of this, how much of that was needed. I didn't know the proportions very well, because when I asked my mother she always told me: a little bit of this, a little bit of that. These had all been tried before, they were 'tried' recipes. We wrote all these off the top of our heads, we didn't have a cookbook with us. We wrote this book daily. We wrote with very small letters, so that more would fit on the paper.

The situation was that we got up early in the morning so that we could wash. The factory had a shower for 80 persons, and there were 3000 of us. There was a long pipe, and there were faucets on it at a certain distance from each other, and a tub in front of it. We stood in line there at 6 in the morning in order to get in: one had to be there on time, because they often turned off the water after a while. We washed our clothes there. We took the string out of the backpack and we dried our clothes on it. Men, women, we bathed together: there wasn't time for us to look at each other, to be ashamed. We were happy that we got in.

When we had washed, we started searching for lice: there were many lice and fleas. Sometimes we didn't wash for weeks, when there were bombings, because they always turned off the water at that time. Not everyone had a small-toothed comb, but I did, because my mother was a

hairdresser. She somehow instinctively packed it for me. It was very useful there. After having washed, we usually went outside in the courtyard. We were only allowed to go next to the factory building and everyone combed her hair with it. There was body louse, too, of course, we searched for those, too. This was a daily routine. Then we got dressed and then lay a blanket on the ground, sat next to the wall, where we either wrote the recipes, or knitted. This was also routine.

I wrote the recipes, because the paper and the pencil were mine. That's how I got to keep it: the entire recipe collection became mine. Someone else of the five dictated the recipe each time. I don't remember that I dictated, I only wrote, in very small letters so that the paper would suffice. It didn't matter what kind of recipes we wrote down. Whatever came to our mind. Recipes for making spices, sweet and salty cookies, meats, sauces and such like. There are many dishes with potatoes and meat among them, and cookies. Not many soups, perhaps because we had enough of them. If you look at the recipes, you'll find mainly filling and 'fattening' dishes. This wasn't conscious of course. There isn't a system in the recipes, we wrote them down as they came. We wrote them down every day, 1-2 hours a day. We talked, too, in the meantime of course. This was also a way of having fun, and time went by easier. I don't know whose idea this was. I kept all of it, we didn't divide it among each other. I don't remember whether I used it, I probably didn't. After the war I found it. I didn't throw it out, I had a cookbook and I put this bunch of papers in there, and that's how I still have it. There are many recipes in it, which I had also used before, I knew many of them. This is a memory for me, I kept this cookbook in the same way I kept the photos. This is important for me.

After the war everyone told his story, because everyone had been somewhere else, and then I found this recipe book, too. I told the people living in the house many stories about it. A woman, Mrs. Szollosi was her name, lived in the house, upstairs, she also came home from Auschwitz. She told me that they had everyone take off their clothes there, and then they were given clothes at random. She got a beautiful evening dress, and she cut off its bottom so that it would be more 'comfortable.' She lived through the whole thing in this, the poor thing.

[In Lichtenwörth] the toilet was in the courtyard, it was a latrine, like a tub, with a wooden frame above it and something to hold on to in front of it. It didn't matter that there were several of us there at the same time. We were happy that we could go there. Women didn't get their period, because they mixed something into the food [Editor's note: There isn't any factual evidence that sedatives (bromide) were administered, though many people from different places said that the prisoners were given bromide.] Many tried to escape through the latrine and run away. The Austrian people were very nice, they let them bathe, wash their hair, and they packed food for some, so that they could give some to others, too, if they came back. It's unbelievable, but there were some who went back [to Lichtenwörth], because they had nowhere to go.

There were some who betrayed them and the guards were already waiting for them in the big room. There was a Jewish guard with ten members in the camp. They were called 'jiddische polizei,' Jewish policemen, jupo [18](#). The German soldiers talked with them, they didn't talk to us. We had to make our beds so that we had to make a path for the SS soldiers with bricks, where they walked through time by time to see if there was order. We weren't allowed to go near the bricks, only next to the wall, so that they wouldn't touch us and catch something from us. They only had contact with these Jewish policemen. They told us all the news. For this work they got an extra slice of bread. And they had those, whom they caught [because they had run away from the camp] lay on

the crossroads and we had to go there and hit them. We pretended of course that we hit them, but in reality we clapped, and if they noticed, we were beaten with a stick or horsewhip. The jupo were very mean. There was a pantry and they kept the margarine, sugar and jam there, the guards and the jupo guarded them.

In the factory building where we slept there was straw scattered on the floor. There had been soldiers there before and the straw was full of lice. And we lay on this, and the lice spread petechial typhus. I was the first one to fall ill with it in the camp. White spots remained on my skin, I remember. I managed to survive somehow. There was a doctor in the camp among the Jews, but he didn't have pain killers or medicines. He was powerless, he diagnosed me, but he couldn't give me any medicines. I pulled through the typhus in the camp, the other three, Magda [the girl from the country], Klari, and the one whose name I don't remember fell ill with it at the end, right before liberation. Klari became hysterical because her hair had to be cut, because she had lice, and they only allowed her in the hospital that way. She ran away from there several times. We had many fights with her. How could they imagine cutting her hair, how would she go to the saloon - she was at a loss. She was a model. That was a huge thing at that time. We told her that by the time she came home her hair would grow again. Then she kneeled and implored, but in the end she let them cut her hair. Eva didn't contract typhus.

In Lichtenwörth there was a small chamber near the factory building, where they put the bodies. There was a handcart, on which they used to carry the coal, the firewood. They put the bodies on it in a pile. But they were in the chamber for at least a day, until several of them were gathered. And there were some, who weren't dead, had only passed out, and during the night, when we went out to the latrine we heard them knock and let them out. It wasn't locked.

I know that they wanted to build a gas chamber in Lichtenwörth. They said that it would have two entrances. We would go in through one of them, and put all our stuff in our backpack. They disinfect us, the backpack comes out through the next door, then we can get dressed. We believed this, but there was a doctor there, a woman, who didn't let them build this gas chamber. I think this was an Austrian woman, but I don't know for sure. [Editor's note: According to Hungarian Holocaust specialist, Gabor Kadar, there is no mention of any such plans in Holocaust literature.]

In April 1945 we escaped at the last minute, when the Russians came. When the camp was liberated one of the jupo asked a woman if she had a white sheet, which they could hang out at the camp so that they wouldn't bomb it, knowing there were Jews there. That's how we found out that we were liberated. I was there for six months. [Editor's note: The Lichtenwörth concentration camp was opened on 10th December 1944, and the Soviet army liberated it on 2nd April 1945.]

When the Russians arrived, everyone said that we should hurry and leave the camp before the Germans came back. They [the Russians] came with a three wheeler, and opened the gates with the end of the bayonet, and went on; they didn't stay there.

So we came out, and there was a storage in front of us, a pantry, and there was margarine, sugar and jam there, and the guards and the jupo guarded it. It was full with packed cheese and cold meat and packed sausage. There was a 15 liter brazen can full of jam and all kind of things that the Germans had eaten. When we were liberated everyone who could went to this pantry with his mess-tin and tried to get food. Sugar, margarine, anything. I remember that they scraped the margarine with their hands, everyone was so hungry. The jupo still guarded the pantry of course,

because it was their interest to have something to eat. Those who could go in didn't care about them; moreover, they hated them, because they were almost as mean as the Germans. They kept in touch with them. There was a rush and fight, people tried to get hold of everything that was in the sacks. They ripped them and the sugar and flour was spilled everywhere. They tried to gather it in the boots and everywhere. There was a jupo, the son of the owner of the Heidecker factory. They made fences and spring-mattresses. They trampled on him, because he slipped on the sugar. He died there. There was an ad I remember, a man jumped from one bed on the other and the ad went like this: 'Either this way, either that way, always to the Heidecker.' This was their advertisement. We, who could move, gathered a lot of food and took it to those who couldn't leave the camp. They died there, because they ate too much. And we left, all five of us, but three fell ill with typhus.

When we came out we entered a house in Neudorf [today Austria], from where the Germans had run away. It was a very nice house, the stove was in the middle of the kitchen, there was also a nice pantry, which was full with field beans. There was also a box there, which could be opened. We found flour, sugar and beans there. We filled the mess-tin with beans, poured water on it and cooked it. We were there for a few days. First all five of us were there, then we took the sick to the hospital. One of us was so sick, that she kept saying that she was so deaf that she didn't hear anything, but the other one was also in a very bad shape. There was a hospital in Lichtenwörth, at the end of the village, and we went there first. They didn't let us in, they asked what we wanted. There was a French doctor there, who spoke German, and we explained to him that three of us were very sick, had typhus and couldn't come with us, and that we wanted to go home. The doctor said that he couldn't accept them, because the hospital was full. But he said that we should come back the next morning, because they had asked for the cellar and if they got it, he would admit them to the hospital. And this doctor explained to us that they weren't that sick, but in fairly good condition, but he would still admit them so that we could leave. We were in the house for two more days, then we set out for home. All three girls got well and came home, but I don't know what happened with them afterward. When they came home they came to my place here on Karoly Avenue, because they knew where I lived, to thank me that we had taken them to the hospital. They came home three weeks later than we did. Klari went back to Klara Rotschild's, I know that. We never met the girl from the country again.

On the way back the Austrians were very helpful. We were so weak that we couldn't climb the stairs. We begged everywhere in Neudorf: my friend had a pullover, and all the clothes we had we exchanged for eggs and bacon, and that's how we got home on foot somehow. Of course they usually didn't let us in the house, but they did let us in the stable, and we often slept there. The Austrians knew all too well who we were. We got bacon and bread at many places. We got to Gyor. There was a hospital in Gyor, there were Russian soldiers there, and horses stood in the courtyard. It didn't function as a hospital, but the Russians were very nice and let us in. In a room they cooked Russian vegetable soup with meat, it was called Russian cabbage soup. Celery, kohlrabi, savoy cabbage, cabbage, turnip and meat were in it. One of the soldiers brought us some, because we were in very bad shape. He kept encouraging us to eat so that we would get strong. They were very nice. It also happened that we were walking and Russian soldiers sat on the bank. We went up to them and asked for food and they gave us all the food they had. This was already in Hungary. We came on an open wagon, which transported coal from there. They always pushed it to a side track of course.



It took us two weeks to get to Gyor, and from there we went home with a coal train. On 17th April we sat down to eat in front of the Great Market Hall, because we had come from the Kelenfold railway station all along Bartok Bela Avenue, and we were so hungry that we couldn't take it anymore. We came along the Danube banks, and I came to Karoly Boulevard through Kossuth Lajos Street. I first started wondering whether my family was alive, whether the house where I lived was still there, when I got to the Astoria. I came up to the gate and it was closed. The same janitor, who had been here when I left, opened the door, and I could only go upstairs on all fours. My mother was standing by the window, and she was speechless when I came on the balcony, and when she saw me she couldn't help crying. My father didn't look out the window, he just looked at her wondering why she was screaming, and only then he noticed that I had arrived. My mother took everything off me, because I was full of lice, and she bathed me and put me in bed right away. Many people had moved into the house, to who they had allocated the apartments.

The head surgeon of a sanatorium was here, I don't remember his name, he came downstairs to examine me, and he said that he would have the entire house closed down if I didn't go to Szent Laszlo hospital to be disinfected. So I had to put my clothes on again and I had to go to the Szent Laszlo. There wasn't any kind of transportation at that time. I went on foot. My father came with me for a while, but he turned back half-way, because he had to go back on foot. There was an apprentice in my brother's shop and he came with me all the way to the Szent Laszlo hospital. I thought that I would go in, they would disinfect me and then I would come home. But I went in, they locked the gate and they didn't let me out. There was barely any water in the town. There was so little water in the tub that they could hardly disinfect me. There were mattresses on the floor in the wards, but there were so many lice in them; it was hard to believe. Those who lay there were all Jews who had returned from camps, and soldiers, but most of them were people who had returned from deportation. On the next day they let me out, and I went home.

While they deported me to Lichtenwörth, my parents were here in the [Budapest] ghetto [19](#). They had to go to 2 Wesselenyi Street. The three of them could get hold of a small room. The ghetto was liberated on 18th January, that's when they broke the gate down, and the day before there were bombings and my parents went to the cellar, and they didn't come up until they were liberated. My father was the first one who came over to the other side. The inhabitants were still in the cellar here. A couple lived in my apartment. My father went up to them and said that he wanted the key to the apartment. They were so shocked to see my father that they handed him the key and never came back again. Then my father came here right away, that's how the apartment remained ours.

Then my parents lived here throughout, because they couldn't go back to their own apartment. Those who had moved in didn't leave their apartment. My mother died here, too, in 1946. She was 64. I remember that when my mother died my brother said that we didn't have the time to cry, because we didn't have enough money for the funeral. My mother lay there dead and we worked to earn enough money. 'We will only earn money if we work,' my brother said. My father died at the age of 85, around 1970, and we buried him in the same grave where we had buried my mother. My brother's friends carried the coffin on their shoulder at my father's funeral. That was the custom at that time. They were buried according to the Jewish religion in the Rakoskeresztur cemetery.

The deceased has to be washed before the funeral service, because according to Jewish religion the deceased isn't clean. This is a special thing. I have been at a washing of the dead once. I was at the washing of the dead of my aunt Eszti. She was one of my mother's stepsisters. During the

washing none of the immediate family members were allowed to go in. But a distant relative or friend had to be there, that's why I went. The morgue consisted of three parts, and they did the washing and dressing up in two separate places. There was a separate place for the men, and a separate one for the women. The washing was done by poorer Jews. There were people who washed the dead, both women and men. The main tool of the washing was the table, where they lay the body with the feet pointing towards the door. They prayed during the washing, too. I remember that they washed her with a water hose with lukewarm water, and it was forbidden to turn her with the face down. After the washing they combed the deceased with a comb used only for this purpose, and cleaned the fingernails, too. Then they put on the so-called burial clothing. This was a white skirt and an apron, and also what was a regulation at the Jewish community. My mother bought these for herself ahead of time and made this package. My aunt got it from the Jewish community.

### Post-war

Not long after I came home my brother was found, too. Though my mom didn't like either her son-in-law, or her daughter-in-law, she kept waiting for them to come home. If she got some dress material, she didn't have it made, but put it away for Ili, my brother's first wife. My brother had three wives. There was a woman who was one year older than him, Ilona Deutsch, she was his first wife. My brother lived on 32 Nador Street. There were only bachelor apartments on the fourth floor at that time. In the room there was a wardrobe, the door of which could be opened downwards, and the cooker and the drawer for the tableware was there. When he first got married they lived there. His wife was deported and she never returned. She died somewhere in Italy, we don't know anything about her. She was deported from the Obuda brick factory in 1944, where I was, too, because they took everyone to the KISOK estate, then to the brick factory, and they deported everyone from there. [Editor's note: It's likely that Hedvig Endrei's sister-in-law was in Soviet captivity after being liberated from deportation.]

Karoly wasn't deported, he was a forced laborer. At the time of liberation he must have been in Gyor or in the surroundings of Gyor. They opened a butcher's shop there, because there were peasants around Gyor, who killed pigs and couldn't bring them to Pest, because there wasn't any means of transportation, so they processed them there. They sold ham, sausage and things like that. When there was transportation he came home, and he brought meat for my parents. Perhaps someone continued to run the shop, but my brother came home to Pest whenever he could.

We had a shelf in the kitchen, there were nails on it. We always hung grapes and things like that on it; we used to dry the fruits there. When my brother arrived with the ham, we hung up the ham, the sausage there. When I got home I was starved, and I wanted to eat some of it by all means, but I wasn't allowed to, because in the meantime I became psoric. There was a doctor here on Tanacs Boulevard, at Madach Square, and he said that we should go back, that he would rather come to our place, because all the windows had been broken there, and if he made me take off my clothes there I would catch a cold. Then he came over and stated that I was psoric, and that my stomach had gotten so weak because of starvation, that I wasn't allowed to eat anything heavy for a while. I had to stay in bed, so that none of my clothes would be infected, and when my mother took a nap after lunch, I always sneaked out and ate of these things. This delayed my recovery.

After the war I couldn't find a job right away, and my father told me that I should go to an association. On 13 Kossuth Lajos Street, in the building of the Uttoro Department Store there was an apartment on the first floor, which was the center of MNDSZ [20](#). This was the Democratic Association of Hungarian Women. I looked them up in 1945-46. As a matter of fact I joined them because my father and my brother urged me, because they thought that I shouldn't be burdensome to my parents, and perhaps I could get a job there. They couldn't give me a job, but I attended different courses. For example I attended the sick-nurse course organized by the Red Cross. I learned window-dressing there, too, which I could use very well later at one of my workplaces, at the cake-shop on Moricz Zsigmond Square. I was a nosy parker, I took part in everything I could. In the meantime I worked in the shop with my brother. After the war my brother opened the shop again on Podmaniczky Street, and when the co-operatives started to be formed, he joined the Budapest Upholsterer Co-operative. He was a technical manager there. He didn't take me with him, he told me that someone had to help my parents, so I remained here, in the Podmaniczky Street shop.

In 1951 I started working in the catering trade. First I was a managing clerk at Bukarest restaurant, it was Borostyan restaurant at that time, on Moricz Zsigmond Square. The owner of the restaurant was the son of a soap factory owner, who went back to the factory, and they were looking for a manager at the shop. I didn't really want to become a managing clerk, but the owner really wanted to convince me to go there. [Editor's note: At this time, in 1951 the Borostyan restaurant was probably not in private ownership anymore.] There were about five to six people under my command. Feri Gundel, Karoly Gundel's son worked there with me, he was the assistant business manager. The Gundels were also Jewish. He came back from where Sztalinvaros was, he was in that region and worked there as a forced laborer. [Editor's note: The interviewee probably refers to the surroundings of Dunapentele, that's where Sztalinvaros was built at the beginning of the 1950s.] Then he came up here, but since he was an undesirable person, the son of a bourgeois, he could only be an assistant business manager. [Editor's note: Ferenc Gundel (1917-1984): a catering trade professional, teacher, specialist. He was one of the organizers of the catering industry college and several training workshops. He was the co-author, publisher's reader of several books. He was one of the founders of the Cook Association.] In the Borostyan there was a Romanian, very diligent, very fine looking chef, who taught me many things. Among others, he taught me how to store the raw materials in the winter, for example the potatoes, so that they don't go bad. Later I worked with this Romanian man in Szeged restaurant, too. We also had a very famous cook, he also taught at a catering school. He was a short thin man, even though he was a cook. I was here until 1952.

In 1952 they opened a café and cake shop on the corner of Himfy Street and Bartok Bela Street, and I became an assistant business manager there, then a business manager. The so-called 'gebine' shops came into fashion at that time. [Editor's note: This was in fact the smuggling back of the private or retail trade into the industry, which was stopped at the time of nationalization. It meant that a company or a co-operative rented a restaurant or a shop for a certain percentage of the income.] This was as if it was private, the owner [i.e. the one who took the shop in 'gebine'] had to account for the merchandise through the company, and the company paid the income, but he worked as if it was his own. The business manager begged me to take over the shop, so that he could go to a 'gebine' shop. This man, his wife and his mother lived on Karoly Boulevard, just as I did. He had a daughter and I always liked children very much. After three weeks of him begging me I took it on. That's when I started a coffee maker course, an ice-cream maker course, a cook's

course and a business manager's course. I was there for eight years, and I got from there to Szeged restaurant as a business manager. When they transformed it into a fishermen's inn, I went to work in Kiralyhago restaurant, on 20-22 Boszormenyi Avenue, I was there for four years and I retired from there in 1972. I was downgraded as a business manager assistant several times, because they could hardly support to have a woman leader, and the director always had a good friend, who needed a business, and whom should they have downgraded, but me! Though I was the only manager who didn't have a deficit. I was in the Borostyan for two years, for eight years in the Korter, for eight years in the Szeged and for four years in the Kiralyhago restaurant. After having retired I worked in Aranyhordo restaurant, up in the Castle Quarter for ten years. I calculated the prices. Then and until I turned 87 I worked in the Biarritz.

There was a band in Szeged restaurant, and Istvan Laki played in that band. He became my partner in life. We lived together 24 years, he died around 1982. He wasn't Jewish. He had two children: Istvan and Andor. Andor became my stepson, because I didn't have children of my own. Andor spent a lot of time in the shop, too. The other one, Istvan, was quite an autonomous boy. His father sent him to learn catering, he was a waiter apprentice. He became a waiter and he worked in Park restaurant. He became a very skilful, very honest waiter, and he defected from there. He went to Vienna [today Austria] first, he was there in a camp, then he went on. [Editor's note: Those who defected, if they didn't have a relative or acquaintance that would accommodate them temporarily, spent the period until they could get a visa for the country they wanted to go to, or where they were accepted, in a camp near Vienna. Many spent even years there.] He now lives somewhere in Brazil. Andor died in 2001 of a heart attack.

My partner in life and I lived quite happily. Our relationship was a professional relationship and love at the same time. He worked at Szeged restaurant as a musician, until he retired. Since he didn't raise his children from his previous marriage, we had quite a calm life, though working in the catering trade meant a lot of staying up at night. We often went to the Balaton for the holiday. We didn't go abroad. Neither I nor Istvan dealt with politics, we weren't members of the Party. This was quite a calm period of my life. I spent my time working in the catering industry. Since I didn't have a child, I worked very much. Now my brother's daughter, born from his second marriage, and Andor's second wife take care of me. While Andor lived, he cared very much for me. He always took me to my parents' grave on Kozma Street. He loved me almost as if I was his mother, and I also loved him very much. After 1945, the period that followed was almost a recreation for me. I didn't have to be afraid of the horrors I had lived through during the war, this period meant a relief for me, even though for many it didn't. The present day political events make me think even more. I always sympathized with the liberals, I used to go to their tent on Madach Square before the elections. I don't spend much time alone, even though I am the only one still alive from the immediate family. The neighbors from the house also visit me often.

My brother lived until the age of 85. He remarried after the war. His second wife was also Jewish, she was called Erzsebet Kiss. She had been married, her husband was drafted during the war, he stepped on a mine and was killed. He had a daughter with his second wife, she was a pathologist in a big hospital in Budapest, and I keep in touch with her. My brother's second wife was 49 years old when she died of kidney trouble. My brother got married for the third time in 1964. Her name was Eva. They didn't have children. This was an old age marriage. Karoly wasn't religious at all, he never went to the synagogue. His wives weren't religious either, the third one wasn't even Jewish.

He spent his last days in Pesterzsebet. He died in 1993 at Rokus Hospital. He was buried in the [Jewish] cemetery in Rakoskeresztur.

It never occurred to me to immigrate to Israel. Perhaps because of my parents, I don't know. I know that many acquaintances told me after the war that they were surprised that they didn't find me on the list of those who emigrated, because they thought that I would also leave. I keep in touch with the Jewish community. I always send them 1000 forint, I contribute to their expenses this way. I subscribe to the paper called Eretz [Zionist newspaper distributed by the Sochnut in Hungary], I usually read that. At New Year's Eve and on the Day of Atonement I usually go to the synagogue. I get compensation from the Claims Conference for having been deported.

On my 90th birthday, on 22nd May 2005, the inhabitants of the house congratulated me. I have lived in the house for the longest time, I don't know whether there are other Jews in the house, but the company has changed a lot. The occupants of this building are relatively nice, but the house has split in two because of the present day political situation.

## Glossary

### **1 Orthodox communities**

The traditionalist Jewish communities founded their own Orthodox organizations after the Universal Meeting in 1868-1869. They organized their life according to Judaist principles and opposed to assimilative aspirations. The community leaders were the rabbis. The statute of their communities was sanctioned by the king in 1871. In the western part of Hungary the communities of the German and Slovakian immigrants' descendants were formed according to the Western Orthodox principles. At the same time in the East, among the Jews of Galician origins the 'eastern' type of Orthodoxy was formed; there the Hassidism prevailed. In time the Western Orthodoxy also spread over to the eastern part of Hungary. In 1896, there were 294 Orthodox mother-communities and 1,001 subsidiary communities registered all over Hungary, mainly in Transylvania and in the north-eastern part of the country,. In 1930, the 136 mother-communities and 300 subsidiary communities made up 30.4 percent of all Hungarian Jews. This number increased to 535 Orthodox communities in 1944, including 242,059 believers (46 percent).

### **2 Civil school**

(Sometimes called middle school) this type of school was created in 1868. Originally it was intended to be a secondary school, but in its finally established form, it did not provide a secondary level education with graduation (maturity examination). Pupils attended it for four years after finishing elementary school. As opposed to classical secondary school, the emphasis in the civil school was on modern and practical subjects (e.g. modern languages, accounting, economics). While the secondary school prepared children to enter university, the civil school provided its graduates with the type of knowledge which helped them find a job in offices, banks, as clerks, accountants, secretaries, or to manage their own business or shop.

### **3 Neolog Jewry**

Following a Congress in 1868/69 in Budapest, where the Jewish community was supposed to

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

#### **4 Obuda**

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

#### **5 Numerus clausus in Hungary**

The general meaning of the term is restriction of admission to secondary school or university for economic and/or political reasons. The Numerus Clausus Act passed in Hungary in 1920 was the first anti-Jewish Law in Europe. It regulated the admission of students to higher educational institutions by stating that aside from the applicants' national loyalty and moral reliability, their origin had to be taken into account as well. The number of students of the various ethnic and national minorities had to correspond to their proportion in the population of Hungary. After the introduction of this act the number of students of Jewish origin at Hungarian universities declined dramatically.

#### **6 Yellow star houses**

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

#### **7 Executions on the Danube Banks**

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

#### **8 Dohany Street Synagogue**

Europe's largest and still functioning synagogue is a characteristic example of the Hungarian capital's Romantic style architecture and was always considered the main temple of Hungarian Jewry. The Jewish Community of Pest acquired the site in 1841 and the synagogue was built between 1854 and 1859, designed by Ludwig Foerster (who also designed the synagogue of

Tempelgasse in Vienna, Austria). Using the biblical description of the Temple of Solomon as a model, he developed his peculiar orientalist style while using the most modern contemporary techniques. The Hall of Heroes with the monument to Hungarian Jewish martyrs, set up in 1991, and the Jewish Heroes' Mausoleum built in 1929-1931 are next to the main building while the Jewish Museum is in an adjacent building.

## **9 Curfew in Budapest**

After Jews were required to move into yellow star houses in June 1944, Hungarian authorities ordered a curfew. Jews required to wear yellow stars were allowed to leave their houses between 2 and 5pm only for medical treatment, bathing and shopping. Those breaching the order were liable to a fine or internment. After the Arrow Cross takeover, the yellow star houses were simply closed for 10 days and Jews were forbidden to leave their homes for any reason. In the beginning of December non-Jews were required to leave the ghetto area while Jews were allowed to come out for only two hours in the mornings. The ghetto was closed on 10th December, its gates guarded by armed Arrow Cross men and policemen. After 3rd January 1945 even dead bodies were not allowed to be taken out.

## **10 German Invasion of Hungary [19th March 1944]**

Hitler found out about Prime Minister Miklos Kallay's and Governor Miklos Horthy's attempts to make peace with the west, and by the end of 1943 worked out the plans, code-named 'Margarethe I. and II.', for the German invasion of Hungary. In early March 1944, Hitler, fearing a possible Anglo-American occupation of Hungary, gave orders to German forces to march into the country. On 18th March, he met Horthy in Klessheim, Austria and tried to convince him to accept the German steps, and for the signing of a declaration in which the Hungarians would call for the occupation by German troops. Horthy was not willing to do this, but promised he would stay in his position and would name a German puppet government in place of Kallay's. On 19th March, the Germans occupied Hungary without resistance. The ex-ambassador to Berlin, Dome Sztojaj, became new prime minister, who - though nominally responsible to Horthy - in fact, reconciled his politics with Edmund Veessenmayer, the newly arrived delegate of the Reich.

## **11 Yellow star in Hungary**

In a decree introduced on 31st March 1944 the Sztojaj government obliged all persons older than 6 years qualified as Jews, according to the relevant laws, to wear, starting from 5th April, "outside the house" a 10x10 cm, canary yellow colored star made of textile, silk or velvet, sewed onto the left side of their clothes. The government of Dome Sztojaj, appointed due to the German invasion, emitted dozens of decrees aiming at the separation, isolation and despoilment of the Jewish population, all this preparing and facilitating deportation. These decrees prohibited persons qualified as Jews from owning and using telephones, radios, cars, and from changing domicile. They prohibited the employment of non-Jewish persons in households qualified as Jewish, ordered the dismissal of public employees qualified as Jews, and introduced many other restrictions and prohibitions. The obligation to wear a yellow star aimed at the visible distinction of persons qualified as Jews, and made possible from the beginning abuses by the police and gendarmes. A few categories were exempted from this obligation: WWI invalids and awarded veterans, respectively following the pressure of the Christian Church priests, the widows and orphans of

awarded WWI heroes, WWII orphans and widows, converted Jews married to a Christian and foreigners. (Randolph L. Brahm: A nepirtas politikaja, A holokauszt Magyarorszagon / The Politics of Genocide, The Holocaust in Hungary, Budapest, Uj Mandatum, 2003, p. 89-90.)

## **12 Arrow Cross men**

Extreme right-wing Hungarian group organized according to the Nazi model. Their symbol became a "Hungarianized" swastika (Teutonic cross), the Arrow Cross. With strong political rivalry between extreme right-wing groups in Hungary, they did not constitute a uniform organization. From the beginning of the 1930s the trend led by Ferenc Szalasi rose above the others and formed the Party of the Nation's Will in 1935. Two years later Szalasi was arrested and Kalman Hubay took over the lead. In 1938 he established an organization permitted by the government under the name of Hungarian National-Socialist Party - Hungarist Movement, which later became an important, if not determinative, power in the Hungarian political arena.

## **13 The bombing of Budapest**

The first bomb attack during WWII hit Budapest on 4-5th, and then on 9-10th September 1942, which was carried out by Soviet long-range bombers that took off from the environs of Moscow. The first bomb attack against Budapest was planned for 2nd February 1944, but postponed because of bad weather, and thus only took place on 3rd April. 450 bombers and 157 scouting airplanes of the American air-force, which took off in South-Italy attacked the Ferencvaros railway station and the airplane factory. Besides the bombings of the Americans during the day, the English air-arm carried out night attacks. On 13th April, 535 American planes attacked Budapest again; their target was the airplane factory and the airport.

From the end of August the Soviet and Romanian air force also bombed Hungary; they carried out intensive attacks against the railway stations and railway bridges in Budapest between 1st and 21st September. The aim of the synchronized allied action was to bomb Hungary out of the war. After this only the Red Army bombed Budapest.

After the first attack on 3rd April 1944 they ordered the evacuation of the endangered. There is no exact data available, but the estimated number of those who left Budapest and its environs is between 2000 and 3000.

The bomb attacks aimed at the annihilation of the war infrastructure (airports, railroads, oil refineries), but besides this many civilians fell victims. Budapest was attacked 34 times, and the number of victims was about 3000.

## **14 KISOK estate**

The KISOK (Kozepfoku Iskolak Sportkoreinek Orszagos Kozpontja - National Center for High School Athletics) estate originally hosted the competitions and championships of high school pupils and the 'levente' (militant and compulsory youth organization) members from all over Hungary. The KISOK estate is situated in the 14th district of Budapest and was built at the intersection of Mexikoi boulevard, Erzsebet kiralyne and Columbus streets, in the late 1920s. According to the Szalasi-government's mobilization decree all Jewish women between 15 and 45 had to be registered at the KISOK estate for "defense work" by 23rd October 1944. All the Jewish women, those who showed up at the KISOK estate, along with those captured in police raids (approx. 20,000 people) first spent a week digging ramparts around Budapest, and were then deported on foot to the German



camps Lichtenwörth and Ravensbrück. [14](#) **Death Marches to Hegyeshalom:** After 15th October 1944 the German occupation of Hungary and the Arrow Cross takeover, even Jewish women were ordered to work in fortifications around Budapest. At the beginning of November the Soviet troops initiated another offensive against the capital. In the changed situation the deportation plans 'had to be sped up' and many transports were directed on foot toward Hegyeshalom at the Austrian border. These marches were terribly cruel and resulted in an unprecedented high death rate. Until the Soviet occupation of Budapest (18th January 1945), about 98,000 of the capital's Jews lost their lives in further marches and in train transports, as well as at the hands of Arrow Cross extermination squads, due to starvation and disease as well as suicide. Some of the victims were simply shot and thrown into the Danube.

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### **[16](#) Protected house**

In November 1944, the International and Swedish Red Cross, as well as representatives of the consulates of neutral countries came to an agreement with the Hungarian foreign minister, Count Gabor Kemeny, to concentrate the Jews holding safe-conduct passes in different parts of the city until the time of their transportation to neutral countries. The zone of these protected houses ('international ghetto') was formed in the Ujlipotvaros district of Budapest, since the majority of residents living there had been sent, in marching companies, toward Austria. In practice, the protected houses weren't a secure refuge. There were often raids for various reasons (fake papers etc.) when many residents were dragged off and shot into the Danube. In January 1945, the Arrow Cross started transporting protected house residents to the large Budapest ghetto, but the determined protests and threats of the ambassadors eventually stopped the emptying of these houses.

### **[17](#) Schutzpass (Free-pass)**

Document emitted by the diplomatic missions of neutral countries, which guaranteed its owner the protection of the given country. Theoretically this document exempted the Jews from several duties such as wearing the yellow star. Most of the free-passes were emitted by the Swiss and Swedish Consulates in Budapest. The Swiss consul Karl Lutz asked for 7,000 emigration permits in April 1944. The emission of the Swedish Schutzpass for Hungarian Jews started with Raoul Wallenberg's assignment as consul in Hungary. Free-passes used to be emitted also by Spain, Portugal and the Vatican. Although the number of free-passes was maximized to 15,600 in fall 1944, the real number of free-passes in circulation was much higher: 40-70,000 emitted by Switzerland, 7-10,000

by Sweden, 3,000 by Spain, not to mention the fake ones. Beginning in mid-November 1944 and citing as a reason the high number and the falsification of passes, Arrow Cross groups started to also carry off those people who had a pass. During raids of Jewish houses, Arrow Cross groups shot all the tenants into the Danube.

## **18 Jewish police**

Carrying out their will the German authorities appointed a Jewish police in the ghettos. Besides maintaining order in general in the territory of the ghetto the Jewish police was also responsible for guarding the ghetto gates. During liquidation campaigns most of them collaborated with the Nazis; in the Warsaw ghetto each policeman had to supply at least five people to the Umschlagplatz every day. The reason for joining the Jewish police, first of all, was based on the false promises of the Germans that policemen and their families would be saved. In the Warsaw ghetto the Jewish police was headed by Jakub Szerynski; during the 'Grossaktion' (the main liquidation campaign in the summer of 1942), the Jewish Fighting Organization issued a death warrant on him, and he was to be executed on 20th August 1942 by Izrael Kanal. The attack failed, Szerynski was only wounded, and in January 1943 he committed suicide.

## **19 Budapest Ghetto**

An order issued on 29th November 1944 required all Jews living in Budapest to move into the ghetto by 5th December 1944. The last ghetto in Europe, it consisted of 162 buildings in the central district of Pest (East side of the Danube). Some 75,000 people were crowded into the area with an average of 14 people per room. The quarter was fenced in with wooden planks and had four entrances, although those living inside were forbidden to come out, while others were forbidden to go in. There was also a curfew from 4pm. Its head administrator was Miksa Domonkos, a reservist captain, and leader of the Jewish Council (Judenrat). Dressed in uniform, he was able to prevail against the Nazis and the police many times through his commanding presence. By the time the ghetto was liberated on 18th January 1945, approx. 5,000 people had died there due to cold weather, starvation, bombing and the intrusion of Arrow Cross commandos.

## **20 MNDSZ (Hungarian Women's Democratic Alliance)**

Women's mass organization initiated by the HCP. It served social and political purposes alike with the primary aim of democratic political education and organizing the unity of Hungarian women. During the first two years of operation it gathered about 500,000 members. Its president was Mrs. Laszlo Rajk, until 1949; its general secretary was Ms. Magda Joboru between 1949 and 1952, followed by Mrs. Istvan Vass. The MNDSZ was dissolved during the Revolution of 1956; its tasks were handed over to the Hungarian Women's National Council.