Erzsebet Barsony

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Budapest
Hungary
Interviewers: Klara Lazok and Viktoria Kutasi
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Unfortunately, Erzsebet Barsony passed away before finalizing the interview; therefore the last specifications were made with the help of her niece, Erzsebet Sandor.

In the text her additions appear in italics in round brackets. The introduction about Erzsebet Barsony and her surroundings is also her work. Hereby we would like to thank her for her kind help.

The only room of the apartment in Ferencvaros is full of former middle- class furniture and carpets. Noticeably they were brought here from a larger apartment.

They are the pieces of a suite made between the two world wars: a chest of drawers combined with a desk, a glass cabinet, a round table with four velvet covered chairs around it.

The carpets, like the objects in the glass cabinet, are not as precious as showy. They represent a former middle-class milieu, which Aunt Bizsu has never really been part of in her entire life.

Aunt Bizsu is a very old, wizened - because of her countless illnesses - woman, with short, snow-white hair and a searching goblin look.

She has poor eyesight and besides one of her eyes is smaller than the other, so her forced looking creates the impression in the person sitting across her that Aunt Bizsu is going to reveal her, and draw even the most hidden secret out of her.

Her lively, sparkling look reflects the lively, sparkling mind, which is a rare gift at the age of 95. Moving is difficult for her: she uses a walking stick, but she doesn't use it at home.

She is self-supporting, as far as she can; she doesn't ask anyone's help. She spends most of the day in the rocking chair near the table: Mici, the cat in her lap, the remote control of the television in her hand.

She watches the Spektrum, National Geographic and Romantic channels. She listens to the television with headphones, so she doesn't disturb the neighbors.

Hanging above her head, in a big black frame is the picture of her 15-year-old son, lost in Auschwitz.

- **Family background**

I don't know exactly where any of my ancestors came from, but surely they were all from Hungary. I know this, because for some years at the beginning of World War II, Hungarian citizenship had to be proved, because there were people who were not Hungarian citizens when Hitlerism began [see anti- Jewish laws in Hungary] 1.

That's why I know that my father was born here in Hungary. Of my great-grandmother, my maternal grandmother's mother I only remember that she couldn't speak Hungarian. Well in Hungary only German was spoken in former times.

[This is an exaggeration of course; it is only true about part of the Jewry in Hungary]. I met her at my grandmother's; she always went there to visit. I couldn't converse with her, she talked to me in German, and I talked to her in Hungarian. She wore a small hat with a ribbon on her head.

This is how I remember her. I only knew her of my great-grandmothers, and her sister. I didn't know any other great-grandparents. I don't know where my grandparents were born, and if they had ever lived elsewhere outside of Budapest, I only know that my father was born in Halabor [today Ukraine].

My grandfather was called Samuel Bauer, my grandmother Leni Weiss. He probably didn't go to school at all. I remember that he used to go to the cinema with my mother, and she read the subtitles for him.

My paternal grandmother and my later stepmother's mother were sisters. It's interesting, that one of the sisters magyarized her name, she was called Eugenia Feher, but the other one, my paternal grandmother Leni Weiss didn't. They had a brother, Uncle Jentli [Jozsef Feher].

My paternal grandparents lived in the same house with us. My grandmother lived on the first floor, we lived on the second. My grandmother kept a maid, too. My grandmother was 63 years old when she died, but I only remember, that the maid used to lace up her shoes, help her to get dressed, and I found her very old.

Now, at age 96, I don't feel as powerless as that 63-year-old woman was. I still put on my shoes alone and don't let myself be dressed. My grandparents were religious, managed a kosher household, had a kosher kitchen and observed the holidays.

My mother's parents, the Kellermanns lived on Hernad Street until the end of their lives. After my mother died, nobody really looked after them. Although my mother had several sisters and brothers, aunts, uncles, and some of them were wealthy. Unfortunately I can't tell you more about

them.

I don't know anything about my Kellermann grandparents' occupation; I was a little girl when they died. They were very religious. Whenever my grandmother saw me, she always cried, because she remembered her daughter. But nobody helped. I have no idea about my grandparents' political views, since we were children, and they didn't share serious matters with us.

As far as I know they didn't have problems because of their Jewish origin, they spoke Hungarian at home, and were on good terms with everybody. [The relationship with this branch of the family was very loose because of the mother's early death].

We lived on Haller Street; I lived there when I got married. We had one large room provided with recess; the recess was separated with an entire dining room set in it. When someone entered, he went into the dining room first, and then followed the bedroom. We had tap water, but no electricity; we used a kerosene lamp for lighting.

Later an oil lamp was introduced. [She is probably talking about gas lighting, for which the gas was obtained from oil. Gas lighting started to give place to electric lighting - especially in apartments - at the beginning of the 20th century]. When my younger sister was born, they employed a maid, because they needed someone to take care of the baby.

She was almost blind and broke almost everything, but they couldn't afford a more expensive one. At that time maid-and-place- finding agencies existed. When someone went to them, he could get a cheaper or a more expensive maid, depending on what kind of maid was needed.

There was a synagogue on Remete Street, which we used to go to, and there was the Pava Street synagogue, but only my sister went there; at that time they were directed there, to Pava Street from school. When I was a schoolgirl, we only went to the synagogue on Remete Street. I also went to the talmud torah, which was also on Remete Street.

At home in the family we always spoke Hungarian, I don't even know if my father spoke any other languages. My parents also observed religion, we had a kosher kitchen and observed Sabbath; I mean they went to the synagogue every Saturday. The women didn't go to the synagogue every Saturday, only on holidays.

However the men, my father and grandfather went on Fridays and Saturdays, too. We observed Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and everything else, Pesach, too. Before the holidays we were always dressed in new clothes from head to toe. (Niece: 'My grandfather of course didn't have payes, he wasn't Orthodox, or at least he didn't look one, because he didn't wear a caftan and tefillin.')

In my childhood on the street where we lived there were Jews and Christians too, but there were no quarrels between Jews and Christians. We all played together; there were many children in the building. As far as neighbors and friends were concerned, it didn't matter whether they were Christian or Jewish. Our neighbor was also a Christian and he was on very good terms with my father. My stepmother made friends with all of our neighbors.

In our neighborhood there was a Jewish coffee shop and a grocery shop too. There was a liqueur store as well, also owned by a Jew. The liqueur store was on the right side of the gate, and on the

left there was a big wine shop. And even in the house, in the courtyard opposite ours there was a pub. I think that what we had the most of were pubs.

There were many Jewish shops, because in the past Jews couldn't be landowners. I only found out as an adult the reason why lawyers, doctors and scholars were all Jews, and why there were no Jewish peasants.

[Until the 1850s the Jews in Hungary could not own land, plots and real estates, and could not occupy positions at state offices, so they were engaged in article production and sale, and money transactions.

When the modernization of Hungary began the Jews oriented themselves towards industrial and trade enterprises, and clerk positions at banks, companies and in the private sector, as well as free intellectual professions.] This was beyond me. Then I started reading, and I found out, that as a matter of fact Jews were not allowed to own lands. So their children had to study in order to be able to make a living.

My father [Izidor Bauer] was born in Halabor. When I was born he was 30 years old, so he was probably born in 1879. We had a shoe shop in the same house where we lived, but I don't remember whether my father was a shoemaker or a merchant. I don't really remember what he was doing before World War I broke out.

I'm sure that my mother was born in Budapest, around 1888. Her maiden name was Ilona Kellermann. I have no idea what schooling she had. My father was 27 years old when he married my mother. I've never seen a wedding picture, maybe there wasn't any. My mother married at a very young age, at age 18.

My father's situation wasn't easy, because my mother had been taken ill with tuberculosis before I was born, and the doctors predicted her three months. Sparing no money and time, my father left no stone unturned to prolong her life, and he succeeded for four years.

She died in 1912. Then he was left there with two children and the remainder of his fortune. The official procedure began, when the court of guardians demanded my mother's marriage portion to be left in safe custody to the benefit of the orphans. (To say nothing of the fact, that by the time we became majors, our money wasn't worth a dime, so we didn't even take it over). But with this arrangement they destroyed my father. This is how we became poor.

- **Growing up**

Generally speaking I have very few memories of my mother. She wasn't even 24 when she died of pulmonary tuberculosis. I was so young that it didn't affect me as strongly as it affected my brother. My brother almost became ill because of it. He was two years older, and it made a big difference. I only put together the pieces of the mosaic later.

My brother, Arpad Bauer, was born on 8th September 1907 in Budapest. We spent a lot of time together in my childhood, because he was only allowed to go to play if he took me along. But I was really a nuisance to him.

He would pick me up and run with me, because he wanted to catch up with his mates. He also only completed the four classes of elementary and four classes of middle school, and didn't learn any kind of trade afterwards, because he helped my father on the market. He got married, because he wanted to be independent.

He was deported together with his wife and their six-year-old son, Gyurika [affectionate for Gyorgy]. The entire family perished in Auschwitz.

My father's parents didn't leave him alone: they wanted him to get married, because they had no patience to look after us; we were a burden to them, so my father got married quite early. I think that this second marriage was arranged.

My stepmother [Janka Bauer, nee Schwartz] wasn't even 18 yet when she married our father.

She probably wasn't in love with my father, but valued him, because he was a diligent and good-looking man, with a furnished apartment, though with two children, but my stepmother took it upon herself, because she wanted to escape misery.

About this second wedding I do have memories; it was in 1914. There is no picture of this wedding either, but I remember what my stepmother looked like as a bride, because at that time I was already five years old and my brother was seven.

We ran away to my step-grandmother's - we lived close to her place - because the wedding was there and we wanted to see the bride. When they noticed that we were there, they took us from there of course, because we shouldn't have been there. It was a normal wedding - the bride wore a veil - in the synagogue.

- **During World War I**

Then the bitter period started. After my father had been drafted in World War I, there was no wage-earner left to provide for us, so my mother had to work. Since we didn't have any reserves, we were left there without any income.

My mother was a trained linen seamstress. She managed to get a job at a very distinguished downtown shop. She did a very good job as a homeworker, she sewed beautiful things on the model of something, they were very satisfied with her, but she earned so little, that she could only maintain herself, and pay the rent.

It wasn't enough for us, so we ate at the grandparents'. There was no picking and choosing; whether we liked the food or not, we simply couldn't get anything else. I was a picky eater; I never found anything I liked, so I rather didn't eat. There was nothing to be found, and we had to stand in line for everything: from frozen potatoes, out of which the juice was running, to everything else. Slowly my brother and I became the ones who stood in line.

There was no electricity in our house, and we had to stand in line for kerosene and for firewood too. The room was never heated, the only heat came from the kitchen stove, and that only as long as the cooking lasted. It is probable that a black market existed at that time too, and one could get everything for money, but we didn't even have a red cent.

My grandparents had money, but they rather invested it in war-loan, and they lost it all. Back then as a child I didn't understand much of these things, I only thought that 'nobody loves us, we are just dragging on in the world. We are children, and we miss parental hugs and love.'

Years went by, and nothing changed. We didn't see our father; we knew that he was alive, but we had no idea about when we would see him again. We only knew that our mother was waiting for him, because she took care of all his belongings. She sometimes took them out and left them in the fresh air, so that they wouldn't become moth-eaten. She preserved jam and all kinds of bottled fruit, and we weren't allowed to touch these, because they were preserved for 'Daddy'; we didn't get much of these. My brother would sometimes pinch from them a little, and he was punished for it. Our childhood went by with us getting used to being poor.

It rarely occurred that my mother organized a festive afternoon, this happened very rarely. She sent us to the candy store for two-three petits fours, and opened a jar of bottled fruit. At these occasions she locked the door, so that Grandma wouldn't find out, because she would have considered it thoughtlessness.

This is how our life passed. I missed caresses the most, because I saw that another mother would give a beating to her child, if he was naughty, but soon after she would hug and kiss him.

Then the prisoners started to drift home slowly, because the revolution had broken out in Russia [see Russian Revolution of 1917] 2 and as they could, people set out for home; our father also arrived. I can't even tell you how happy we were. My father was surprised that he could change his clothes: we had kept all his clothes; not even a handkerchief was missing. He became an 'elegant man' in seconds, and only then did I start to recognize him.

Although not many changes took place in our life, because in the meantime the revolution broke out here too [see Hungarian Soviet Republic] 3, which was very interesting for us, as children, but it was a terrible thing for the adults. Just as before, there was nothing to be had, but perhaps we had a little bit more.

Perhaps my grandmother had opened her purse, out of joy on the return of her only son, or my father had money, I don't know, but our life turned for the better. But not for a long time, because our father was in poor health, and couldn't earn enough money; poverty brought along anxiety, nervousness, and quarreling.

There was chaos in the country. We could have been satisfied easily, because we liked beans very much in every form and pasta too: this was the poor man's food, because it was cheap, but our mother didn't like it, and generally didn't really like to cook.

My younger sister, Margit was born when my father came home from the war, in 1919. She was ten and a half years younger than I was, but she is already dead. I loved her enormously. There had always been this very strong bond between us. My sister was still busy going to school - she was eight years old - when I got married.

Then she became an apprentice in my shop and learned the milliner trade. She married a Christian man, Laszlo Toth, and it was due to this that she wasn't deported. (The statement of the niece, Margit's daughter, about her mother's fate: 'Her parents had a cousin called Margit, who emigrated

with her jeweler husband to Brazil at the beginning of the 1930s, and he was successful as a jeweler. /Margit Bauer's parents, Izidor Bauer and Janka Schwartz were cousins, this is how they had a common cousin/.

This Margit, on the occasion of her visit to Budapest in 1937, took the small Margit Bauer with her and so to say adopted her, and practically they made her emigrate. My mother was still a young girl, she wasn't even 20, but because of her unquenchable love for Laszlo Toth she came home in 1939. She begged them to let her go home, so that she wouldn't have to look at the sea in Brazil. So she came home after two years, and she was homesick for Brazil all her life.')

In the house where we were raised, there were many children and we played together very much, and we were always loud, because we had no real toys so we ran around from the attic to the cellar, and yelled 'ipi-apacs.'[A variation of the hide-and-seek game combined with a race.

The finder counts turning towards the ipi-apacs wall, while the players hide away, then he sets off to find them. The players who are found run a race with the finder to the wall. If the last player reaches the wall first, the finder remains finder for another turn, if the finder wins the race to the wall, the last player takes the finder's place.

If the finder beats more than half of the players in the race, then the player who was first found takes the finder's place. Hajdu Gyula: Magyar népi játékok gy?jteménye (Bp., 1971).] Or we played 'give us a soldier, king!' [A game played by two teams. The teams line up facing one another and the team members grab each other's hand.

The stronger players run into the other team by turns and if they manage to break the line get a player from the team in question. The team with the more members wins.] I think children these days don't know this game, but for this we didn't need any money, only good feet and throat, and that was for free.

There lived a family next to us, the Fenyes', they also belonged to my childhood, and played an important role later in my life. [As can be seen in the family tree, they weren't only neighbors, but relatives as well: Roza Fenyes was the father's sister, so she was an aunt.]

At their house we were allowed to do everything, we played theater, put on all kinds of clothes and jumped up and down on the sofa. In a word, we messed up the house many times, but we tidied up the room in some measure, so that by the time Aunt Roza, the mother came home, she wouldn't find too big a chaos.

It was a joyful family, although they were even poorer than we were. They moved here from Szatmar [today Romania] when the war broke out. Their apartment was the same size as ours, but there were nine children, the oldest one was 13 years old, the two youngest a couple months old - they were twins. They had two children who didn't live with them anymore, a boy, who was born deaf and dumb, and was raised at the institute for the deaf and dumb, and their next daughter wasn't with them either, she lived somewhere abroad. Miklos [Mor] was 13 years old, then followed Pali [affectionate for Pal], Cilike [affectionate for Cecilia], Szeren, Etus [affectionate for Etelka], who was of my age, then the twins, Berta and Laci [affectionate for Laszlo].

Aunt Roza was a poor peddler, she even traveled on top of the train, when she went to the country and took there whatever people there needed, and brought things she could sell back here. The two older boys also helped her: they sold candy to the soldiers at the Jozsef Ferenc army post.

Meanwhile they should have been looking after the smaller kids, but I think that they grew up on their own, nobody bossed them about. Perhaps this is why they were cheerful. When Aunt Roza arrived - sometimes only at 10 in the evening - she was very quick: she quickly fixed some dinner, woke the children up, and then they ate.

She always cooked things the children liked. She made up fabulous things, for example she cooked corn in a big pot, which people usually feed to chicken, potato pasta, which I liked very much, and beans in all forms, in any way she could think of. She had ideas, she diluted browned semolina with water, and then she boiled it down, and there was always some topping: yellow sugar or fried onion.

I went to school a very long time ago, during World War I. I didn't always go to the same school, because sometimes there were soldiers in the school that was close to our place. I started school at the age of six, which was around 1915. I had a terrible anti-Semitic geography teacher, in the third or fourth grade, as far as I remember, who hated Jews very much. When a Jewish child confused something, she would say, 'Go to Palestine!' I also remember the handicraft teacher.

Then there was the class mistress; there were no problems with her, and she never said anything nasty about Jews. She was a beautiful woman. There were no problems with any of my classmates. Anyhow, I was a very withdrawn child, things at home weren't really sound, and it could be felt that our mother had died.

I couldn't really relax and fit in, I was always lonely. I wasn't an excellent student, but I always learned the lessons we were given and even that only because my mother required it. I hated the subjects for which I had to cram up, because I never understood what I learned this way. I have another interesting experience from school.

We marched with the school when the revolution [the Chrysanthenum Revolution] broke out. Then they took us to the Orczy-garden, and we ran up and down in the trenches, on the enclosed section where they trained the soldiers.

I didn't finish middle school [see Civil school] 4, because I had to go to the hospital: I had a major operation, which determined my entire life. I was ill for six years. I dropped out from the second class of middle school, and I was ill until age 17. I had tuberculosis.

My mother died of pulmonary tuberculosis, and it seems that the illness affected my bones [skeletal tuberculosis]. The illness broke out as a result of a hit. My grandmother's maid was swinging a heavy iron pot and I ran into it and it hit my thigh.

After a couple of months it turned out that I had a limp. They said it was a bad habit. By the time they discovered what my problem was, I had such a big hole in my thighbone that it collapsed at every step. I was in the hospital for one year uninterruptedly.

A famous professor operated me for free, but only because I was an extraordinary case. Otherwise he only operated people if they paid a lot of money. The professor learnt his trade on me, and due to his malpractice I didn't recover for six years, and the illness lasted until age 17. My childhood was taken by the war, my maidenhood by my illness.

After I recovered I wanted to learn a trade at all costs, but my mother didn't want me to, since she could use me as a maid for free at home. My mother sewed, but she could never live on that. She's never let me go anywhere on Sundays, or to meet my girlfriends, colleagues.

She would only allow me to go and learn a trade if I did everything after I got home. So I became a milliner apprentice. The milliner's where I was working, wasn't making enough money, and my boss told me that he was going to discontinue but not terminate my contract, so that I wouldn't lose a year, and that if I found a new job, he would transfer my contract. I tried to find an employment, and I managed quite quickly.

I liked my trade very much, and I learned it very quickly too: after half a year I worked independently. The mamzel made the model hat, and then I made the other hats afterwards. Of course, there wasn't only me, but there were other apprentices and independent workers as well, and I was one of these, only my salary was an apprentice salary, even though I did a better job than any of them. I could have even substituted the mamzel, and I told her, that if she didn't pay me more, I wouldn't stay there any longer.

She didn't take it seriously, but the day I told her, I went to find a job somewhere else. I had much self- confidence, and I knew that I could find an employment, and I did find another job.

Meanwhile I had a personal life too: in the evenings I washed the dishes at home, and at weekends I did the housecleaning, but sometimes I did have some free time, and got together with the Fenyes children. True enough that they weren't children anymore.

Miki [Mor Fenyes] was the oldest, and he also went to fairs, and he sometimes came to our place to play chess with my father, and sometimes we had long conversations. He had problems, wanted to marry, and he thought that if he married a wealthy girl he would open a shop.

Whenever he had the time he went looking for a wife. Many times he discussed it with me, and he even introduced me to some of them.

I had a girlfriend and sometimes my mother let me go out on Sundays, but I had to be home by 8 o'clock. I had a very good time there, because we got together, boys and girls. Aunt Balazs - that was their first name - was very hospitable, she always baked milk loaf, and there was coffee or chocolate milk, too. Meanwhile, months went by, and I felt really bad about going to the Balazs' all the time, and I thought that we should have invited them, too.

My mother didn't want to because she said that we couldn't afford it. I had served my apprenticeship when she finally agreed that I invited the Balazs kids with their partners, Etus Fenyes, who was my age, and a girlfriend of mine called Szidi.

- **Married life**

At that time Miki was coming to play chess with my father quite often. My mother was annoying me by saying that he wasn't coming because of the chess, but because of me. I told her that it couldn't be true, because he kept discussing with me where he had been looking for a wife.

Moreover we were good buddies, and I couldn't imagine him as my boyfriend. But that week, when he came up to our place I told him that we were going to have guests on Sunday, and that he should come too, if he felt like it. Sunday arrived, the guests came, and to my biggest surprise, Miklos arrived, too.

Because at that time there was no radio or television, we usually played cards or games, or we sang. My girlfriends asked me to sing, and because I had a fine voice and I liked to sing too, they didn't really have to talk me into it.

Once, I noticed that Miki didn't take his eyes off me. I didn't know what to think about it, because I wasn't in love with him, we were just good buddies. I had reconciled myself long ago to the thought that I would never get married, because neither poor nor rich would have wanted someone as poor as I was.

Then in November 1927 on Erzsebet day Miki came up and brought me a gold bracelet. [In Hungary it is a custom that everyone has a name day on a certain day of the year, and that is usually celebrated just like birthdays.

At some places the name day is considered even more important than someone's birthday.] That's how it became clear that he had serious intentions with me. We talked very much, and he had always said, that if he married, he would want his wife to love him. I had remorse because of this, because I thought that I wasn't in love with him.

I liked him very much as a man, but I had never thought about getting married to him. I felt obliged to tell him that, and he answered that I would fall in love with him later. In any case, in my situation I had to be happy that someone wanted to marry me and I could get away from home. This wasn't a small matter to me.

So, in August 1928 we got married: I was 19 years old, my husband eight years older. Our wedding was in the synagogue on Rumbach Street. We moved out of our parents' immediately. It was very difficult to get an apartment. We had to pay some money to the previous tenant, and we got a one-bedroom apartment with a kitchen, which had no toilet and water, everything was outside. We rented the apartment in Kispest, because my husband had got a job there.

Before we got married, Miki used to go and sell things at fairs. After we got married, he didn't want to do that anymore. We went to Kispest, because his younger brother lived there and held market, and said that one could live of it.

My husband had a textile shop, too, but that was only open when there was no market. This worked well for him, but as a matter of fact we started doing better when I also opened a shop, although I didn't have the slightest intention of doing so originally. Where we lived, besides the owner, another family lived there too.

The wife was a teacher, and she opened a stationery shop, because she had quit teaching. She convinced me to open a milliner's since I was a milliner. Hats were very much in vogue at that time. I was afraid that I would go bankrupt, and that I would lose the money.

My husband knew these things better and told me: 'I set aside a certain amount of money for this, and if it is lost, I accept it. Fortune favors the brave.' So we opened a tiny little shop, which we furnished ourselves. We bought a mirror, we made the boxes ourselves, and we furnished it in a very simple way, but it worked from the first moment.

I opened on 30th May 1930. Business prospered, even though it was the end of the season when I opened it.

Meanwhile my son, Ervin Fenyes, was born on 25th July 1929. Of course it wasn't the best time for it, but children come the quickest, and if I hadn't so ignorant... My child was nine months old when I opened the shop. My stepmother didn't help; she never came, not even once, to look after my son.

I had to keep an employee to have someone take care of my child if I wasn't at home. I employed a young one, who I thought would take care of my child and do the housework. Later, when I was already doing better, I employed a German woman, too. I gave up on having a kosher kitchen at this time, when I wasn't running the household anymore, because I wasn't at home.

Sometimes, when I went home accidentally, because that happened too, I noticed that they confused the milk pots with the ones for meat. 'I am spending a lot of money, because kosher costs double, and meanwhile I eat treyf. Then what for?' From then onwards I wasn't kosher.

So my business prospered, and I employed apprentices, too. I worked alone, even my husband helped me out. [The interviewee means that she didn't have associates in the business, but was the only person in charge.] We could make a very nice living. We could even save up some money.

Then we moved and got a bathroom, and pantry, and had running water in the apartment. As our situation changed for the better, of course our expectations grew as well. By then I wanted a comfortable apartment, because I had the possibility for that.

But I advertised in vain, because I couldn't find one close to the shop, from where my husband could go to the market easily, and on a street where carriages could enter. Back then there were dirt roads, and there were streets where horse carriages couldn't go in.

Then I found a house, which wasn't in a very good shape, but it was in a very good place. Of course we needed a little loan for that, too. We could pay it back soon, but I couldn't fix the house that year, because I didn't have that much money.

Then one year later, in 1931 I spoke with a master builder, and they repaired and insulated the whole house, and we enlarged it, because one of the rooms was very tiny. So we ended up with two front rooms of the same size, and we had two other rooms overlooking the courtyard and the kitchen. We built two and a half meters on to the kitchen, and so we got a corner- room, which became my son's room.

This renovation was very difficult, because when we started building, I was ill in bed for two months. [Probably the childhood skeletal tuberculosis flared up again]. The two apprentices ran the

shop, because there was nobody else to do it.

Then, when I could finally get up somehow - but I couldn't walk - a taxi took me to the shop and there I lay all day long in a deck-chair and directed the things from there, and I also worked, but I still couldn't walk. It wasn't that easy.

Then this period passed, too. In the meantime my younger sister had also finished school, and because my parents were very poor, they couldn't help at all, she couldn't continue her studies, and became an apprentice in my shop. She learned the trade and she also became a milliner. So when I was ill, she and an apprentice were running the shop.

Two years later, in 1932 I opened a bigger shop, because we had outgrown the small shop. The small shop was in a good spot, but the other one was in the center of Kispest, in the best place. It was beautifully furnished.

There wasn't any other shop in Kispest as modern as mine was, with neon lamp, coconut carpet, fitted furniture, mirrors and drawers with a glass top. There were shop-windows, where the hats were displayed. I opened a beautiful shop, and there was a separate workshop, too. It was a very elegant shop.

Fortunately this one was also prosperous, and even though I had spent a fortune on it, it was worth it. In the meantime I had my son enrolled in school at age six.

- **During World War II**

I couldn't complain at all, until 1939 started. We had no financial problems, until 1939 [because of the anti-Jewish laws in Hungary] we had no problems at all.

Even though we had heard enough about Austria [the Anschluss] 5 and Hitlerism, it didn't affect us that closely, but when my husband was drafted into forced labor in 1939, we started feeling it on our own skin. He had to go to forced labor for a couple months in 1940 and in 1941, too. After he left in 1942, he never came back. Our last meeting with my husband is a story in itself:

My husband was in forced labor in a small place called Iklad near Aszod. One day someone came shouting into my shop, saying that the forced laborers from Iklad were being taken out of the country. I left everything there, rushed home and told my mother to pack me up everything that was at hand, because I was hurrying, going to Iklad.

I packed up the warm clothes he had brought home, because he thought he wouldn't need them and I took them to him. With many difficulties I got to Aszod by taxi and streetcar. On the way I saw a train which was going toward Pest, and I was going towards Aszod. I saw that there were many laborers on it; I was desperate that I was late. Aszod was completely empty.

Then I met a soldier, and tried to bribe him to talk. Finally he told me that they were at the railroad station in Jozsefvaros, and that I could find them there.

I was out of my mind and wanted to go back, but there was no train. Finally I found a car, which took me to Godollo, near Aszod. He couldn't take me further, because his car wasn't good. Then I

got another car that took me to the railroad station in Jozsefvaros. But there was such a silence there, that I knew that there must have been a mistake, because there was nothing.

I looked for the boss at the station, the boss of the railroad station, and asked him to help me out and explain to me where they were. He told me that he couldn't say anything, because that wasn't his duty, he couldn't say anything.

I kept begging him until he told me that the train was in Rakospalota-Ujpest. He didn't even accept anything in return. He was very kind to me. Then there I was, sitting on the streetcar, because the taxi wouldn't take me anywhere, because it wasn't allowed to go further.

When I arrived I knew immediately that I was at the right place, because there were very many people at the railroad station and a lot of shouting. From the shouting I found out that the train was about two kilometers away on open track.

High above there was a passage, and I went up there, crossed to the other side and set out for the place where the train was. I kept walking and walking, and I thought that I would find a broken spot in the fence where I could creep in. I did find a great big hole, where I could have slipped in, but two soldiers were standing there. I told them, 'God bless you, don't look, turn away, I must go in here.' They let me in and I started looking for my husband.

I stopped at every car and shouted, 'Miklos Fenyes, Miklos Fenyes!' There were people who knew where he was and they showed me the car my husband was in. They told him, 'Come, your wife is here.' But he wasn't willing to come out, and told them not to pull his leg. Finally I shouted to him, 'I'm here!' He was beside himself.

He asked how I had got there, how come I was there. I don't even know myself how I got there. My journey started in the morning and I found my husband at 9 in the evening. This was our last encounter. I never saw him again. He died, even though he had promised to come home. He told me that he would be okay, that I should take care of myself and then everything would be alright.

Of my first husband's eight brothers and sisters, the girls [Szeren, Etus] died in the deportation, but there were twins among them as well [Berta and Laci], and they survived. The boy died of leukemia ten years ago.

The girl went to Israel [then still Palestine under British rule] in 1939 with her two little children and her husband. I loved her daughter very much. She was called Angyal [meaning Angel in Hungarian]. It's interesting that Angyal and her brother visited me two years ago. The boy was five years old when they left.

I was so happy to see him, as I would have been to see my husband. But he died too, suddenly, not long ago.

In the meantime we had to close the two shops, because Jews weren't allowed to have that either. This happened long before we had to wear a yellow star, as I recall. I know that one evening we closed the shop, and in the morning we couldn't open it anymore, so everything was left there, was wasted.

[Among the different orders striking the Jews, they ordered wearing the yellow star on 31st March 1944, and they closed the Jewish shops on 21st April].

Then our house became a yellow-star house 6. I didn't want to move out of my house, so I rather took other families into my house. Everyone got a room; there was a family for example, which had lived together before, so they lived in one room.

My parents (Niece: 'She immediately took them into her house when it became a yellow-star house'), my child and I moved into one room, and handed over all the other rooms. At the beginning my younger sister stayed with us too, but then they had to move, because her husband was a Christian. She was very keen on staying with us, but I convinced her to go, because she could have maybe helped us. So she swapped places with a Jewish family that lived in the house across.

I made an effort so that everyone would have her own kitchen to avoid chaos. One got the laundry room as a kitchen, for the other one I split my kitchen in two, and there was a storage room which became the third family's kitchen. As a matter of fact, we could have gotten along very well, but it didn't happen like that.

I always knew what was going to happen, but there was always a little hope that I was wrong. [In Kispest they packed in around 4000 local Jews in 548 rooms in designated houses, which were in 53 streets of the town. The transfer took place between 15th and 30th May. (Randolph L. Braham: A magyar Holocaust, Budapest, Gondolat/Wilmington, Blackburn International Inc., é. n. /1988/).]

Then everything happened the way I had expected. The deportations started the way I had imagined. When the gendarmes came to Kispest, I knew that we were in trouble. I can't even say that I couldn't have escaped, because the relatives from Pest kept asking me to go with my child and stay with them.

I told them that I couldn't go, that I couldn't leave my parents there, and that I would stay with them. My father loved the garden, he kept planting things, did woodwork and kept rabbits. I was very glad to see my father happy. Then the gendarmes occupied every Jewish house, the courtyard, and the street too.

We couldn't even step out of the house. Then 30th June 1944 arrived when the gendarmes came into our house. They told us that we were going to set off, but first everyone should undress in their room. 'Take off all your clothes,' they shouted, so that we wouldn't hide anything. I didn't have anything on, I only had my wedding ring by then, I thought that perhaps they wouldn't take it. But the gendarme took that off, too.

We packed up everything, so that we would have some clothes and some food. But the gendarmes overturned the backpack, and we could keep only what they allowed. In the entrance door a gendarme took a liking for my child's boots, and made him take them off at once. And my son was left there barefoot. And so they took us to the railroad station in groups, on foot.

There were some people, who had compassion for us, and there were others, who didn't. I think there were more who didn't, because somehow it was very easy to turn people against us. But even those who would have wanted to help couldn't do it, because they didn't let anyone close to

us.

So we went to the railroad station, we were put on the train and set off for the brick factory in Monor. There were countless people there already, a couple thousand. [Monor was a so-called entraining center; they concentrated here the Jewish inhabitants from the towns to the south and east of the administrative borders of Budapest.

From the Monor brick factory they deported around 7500 people to Auschwitz between the 6th and 8th July 1944]. Pregnant women, the ill and women with children were put under the roof where the bricks were kept. We were sitting on bare ground in the mud, and were happy that there was enough room for all of us to sit on the ground.

We even slept there and waited for a miracle to happen. There were serious bombings while we were at the brick factory, and I wished so much that a bomb would hit and that we would all die. So we hadn't even left Hungary and the horrors had already begun.

There was no water supply on the territory of the brick factory, so a horse carriage went for water to a farmhouse in Monor every day. My sister went to this farmhouse every day and brought food and what she could, and after I found out that she was there every day, I went somehow with the carriage every day and we met there.

We were at the brick factory for eight days altogether, and on the sixth day one of my girlfriends, who was also there with her nine-year-old daughter and her parents told me that we should escape together when the horse carriage set off.

We would have hidden in the toilet before, and when everything calmed down we would have come out and walked away. I answered that I wouldn't leave my parents, because nobody would take care of them.

At that time I thought that I might have a possibility to look after them. The strange thing was that her parents were very wealthy and raised her as a princess. Still, for her what was important was to escape with someone. I think she is comfortably off up to this day.

On the seventh day my parents were released because their daughter was the wife of a Christian man. And I stayed there with my son, whereas I could have escaped if I had gone with my girlfriend on the previous day, but my conscience didn't allow me to do it.

My poor father begged them, he almost cried, so that they would release me too, but they told him not to talk much because otherwise they would keep him there, too. I implored him not to say anything, just go, because then I would have less trouble.

They released them, and as I found out later, they were taken again two weeks later. They were taken to the internment camp in Sarvar, and they were sent to Auschwitz from there; both of them died there. [The largest internment camp of the country was in Sarvar, from where they deported 1500 Jews to Auschwitz.]

So I stayed there with my child, and we were taken in a transport the next day. My sister accompanied us to the railroad station, because we went on foot. The ones who couldn't walk were put on a carriage, and I gave my pack with the food and clothes my sister had brought to an

acquaintance who was put on the carriage, so that I wouldn't have to carry it.

Of course we were taken to an entirely different place than those. I never met them again, so I didn't have food, clothes, anything on earth. It was very hot, because this happened in July. They deported us in cattle cars, and there was an incredible crowd. We traveled for three days, day and night, in awful conditions. We could hardly sit.

My child was about 192 centimeters tall, and the poor thing had to be folded as a folding ruler. He always wanted to look out the lattice window. I told him, 'My son, sit down, because that way you take up less room.' We didn't have any water or food, we didn't have anything.

There were some, who had everything, but practically they didn't eat either, or if they did, I didn't see it. They had big pack and thought that it would last them. Nobody knew what was going to happen next. It was awfully hot, and someone had pity on me and gave me a sleeping gown, and I was in that sleeping gown throughout. My legs were bad, and I wore elastic stockings, bandage.

After three days, on 12th July we arrived in Birkenau. We were set down; everyone took his belongings, and tried to protect themselves against the heat. The first thing they did was separate me from my child, they told everyone in which group to stand. There was such confusion in my head I couldn't even comprehend it.

I was standing there with my emotions numbed. Then my son turned up, hugged and kissed me and told me in tears, 'Mom, you'll see, we'll meet again, you'll see, we'll meet again!' He could think more clearly than I could. I was just trembling, I feared that they would catch him and strike him dead in front of me, because he had left his row. I just kept telling him, 'Go back my son, go back. So that nothing will happen.' And poor him tried to comfort me. This was a horror. I never saw my 15-year-old son again.

My son, who had been playing the violin for nine years, and was going to the conservatory, and whose teachers had great hopes for him! He wanted to be an artist, a violinist. Nothing has become of him. (Niece: 'According to the family legends the young Ervin was so talented, that a master who had serious Nazi bonds took on his teaching, and allegedly there was a picture of Hitler on the wall of the practice room. But there are just as many family memories saying that Ervin hated practicing, and that he was really interested in machines, in technical matters.')

So they set us down, lined us up and then set us off. The Lager [German for camp] was situated on a huge area, in fact it was a huge settlement made up of many Lagers. There was a separate Lager for men, for women and for families. Along the road on the right there were wire fences, and huge fires were burning in several spots. I didn't know what it could be. In fact nobody knew anything. Later it turned out that the huge fires were there because they had burned down the Czech family Lager the night before we arrived.

The crematorium was already filled up, and they burned bodies wherever they could. [In the summer of 1944 the crematoriums in Auschwitz couldn't bear the loading and SS regimental sergeant major Otto Moll made them dig big burning pits: nine huge (40-50 meters long, 8 meters wide and 2 meters deep) trenches altogether, where they lay three rows of bodies on top of each other, poured kerosene on them and set them on fire.]

We arrived and they directed us into a huge room, it was bigger than a riding arena. The commanders were standing there and we had to take our clothes off immediately. At one place we had a close crop, then they sprayed us with all kinds of powders from the front, from the rear, under our armpits, everywhere. Then they took us to the baths where there were showers. After they drove us out from there, they threw some clothes to everyone, not caring about sizes at all.

This doesn't mean pants, bras, underwear, stockings, and shoes. Just an article of clothing. In the meantime they didn't say a word; they treated us worse than animals. And this was only the beginning. I put on the rag; fortunately it went round me twice.

There were some unfortunates, who couldn't even put it on. Since they kept an eye on us all the time, people couldn't even exchange these rags among one another. Those who didn't fit into the clothes they had been given waited there naked. Then we set off again somewhere.

The Lager was surrounded by a great number of wires. I had no idea what the wires were. Somehow I came across the women I had traveled with. Some who could speak with the Germans were well informed and were made leaders. Unfortunately I couldn't speak German. The men went into the Czech family Lager where we had seen the fires burning.

In the Lager there were barracks, which were probably transformed from stables. We could see the rings where the animals had been tied. We were the last but one transport, and they had no place to quarter us. The Lager was so full that we stood about for a night, so we slowly learned to sleep on foot leaning against each other.

About two days later, when they gave us food, I couldn't eat, even though I was hungry. There was everything in the food, from pieces of wood onwards. I noticed that those who had been there for a longer time were able to bear things much better, because they had got used to them.

In the meantime they took away transports all the time, so places were cleared. That is how I got a plank bed, but this was a plank bed with rough boards and with gaps in between, then another board, then a gap. My shoe was my pillow, so that my head would rest a little higher. It was terrible, because we couldn't leave the plank bed either during the day or at night: we had to eat there, and there were three times more people there than it could hold. Half of the day we were standing on Zellappell [German for roll- call].

That meant that at dawn they brought us out of the barracks to the Lagerplatz [German for assembly point] and lined us up in rows of five, leaving a path between us. We had to stand there, until they changed their minds and drove us back into the barracks.

We were allowed to go to the toilet and to wash up in a group. If something happened in the meantime, they punished the person in question, because she dared to relieve herself at a different time than they allowed it.

Our life was always a close shave. I had a very interesting experience. We were standing on Zellappell, and a woman came up to me, I didn't know her, and told me to give her my hand. 'What do you want to do with it?' I asked. 'You will have a very long life,' she said to me. It was so ridiculous to hear such a thing there, because life was worth nothing there, and I told her, 'You fool, how can you say such a stupid thing? Tell me something wiser!' Then she said, 'I can't tell you

anything else, but what I see.' And I was raging at the thought that someone could be that stupid.

This was all an awful situation for me. I knew full well that I had to work, do something, anything, because I couldn't stand loafing. I would have rather walked than stood about. There were transports every day, and I had to step forward all the time. Once I managed to get into the group in which they controlled everyone.

To my bad luck Dr. Mengele was the one making the selection. I went there in front of him, naked of course. I couldn't understand what he was saying. I found out only later, that they were debating whether they should send me to the gas or leave me alive for a while, because I had a physical defect, since they could see the traces of my childhood surgery.

So I was standing about there until our leader, a Polish woman pulled me away - these were all leaders, the Polish, the Slovak, because they had arrived at the Lager earlier. So then I managed to escape. I was back in the Lager again, and there was some other transport, and I stepped forward again. I had to take my clothes off again, but this time I put my clothes on my arm, so they covered my leg, and the traces of the operation couldn't be seen. So I was taken in the transport.

First they took us to the baths. We took a shower there, they gave us normal clothes, panties, but they were rather like the old fashioned flannel knickers, which had a string that had to be tied on the waist. Then we stood there and waited.

Then it turned out that there were no more transports that day, and they turned us away, but they didn't take us back anymore, but took us to a different Lager. In that Lager the conditions were entirely different, because there were no barracks, but rooms with jointed floor. There were no plank beds, we could lie only on the floor. There were no blankets, pillows, and there wasn't anything either underneath or on top of us. There wasn't as awful a strictness as in the other Lager.

We were there, I don't know for how many days. Then they grouped us again and set us off. We went to the baths again. When we got there we had to take our clothes off again and they gave us other clothes, and we could only enter the Lager after taking a shower and after we got clean clothes again. They lined us up, and they gave us real food: margarine, bread and cold cuts. I pulled the string of my panties together and I put my food in there.

So I didn't put the panties on, but used them as a string bag. They put us on trains; we were quite comfortable there. We could lie and sit. They put a bucket of coffee in the car, but it was gone within moments. They set us off on 20th August [1944], and we traveled for three days, day and night, until we arrived at a labor camp in Lubberstedt near Brema. [Lubberstedt was one of the subcamps of the Neuengamme concentration camp.]

In this Lager there were wood cabins, and on the plank beds there were blankets, or rather horse blankets. These were bunk beds. Everyone had a plank bed for herself. I had some kind of thin mattress under me, which was filled with straw.

We had to get up at dawn, they whistled, and we had to rush to be all there on time and get lined up. We never knew where we would work. We couldn't know it, because they always started setting off the groups from a different point.

Sometimes they took us to work in the bomb factory, where they produced small bombs. Sometimes they took us into the woods to pick mushrooms, and sometimes we picked stinging-nettle. That wasn't so bad: at the worst my hand became all blistery.

Sometimes they took us to plant potatoes. That was the better scenario, because we planted the potatoes in one row, and took some out of the other. Then we could eat raw potatoes at least. Sometimes they took us to transport things in mine cars.

That was very difficult, because the weather had turned very cold by then, and the rails were frozen to the ground. We had to take them up and take them to the place they ordered. Then there was the turnip cleaner, the potato cleaner and the kitchen workers. It was a good thing for someone to get to work there.

Then a change occurred: another Lagerfuhrer [German for camp director] came. This Lagerfuhrer dismissed two workers from the kitchen and I don't know for what reason, he put me in the kitchen. I didn't like it there, because the kitchen workers were from Maramaros [today Sighetul Marmatei, Romania], and they were all acquainted, friends or relatives. I didn't belong there. I became the last maid, and I had to do the hardest and dirtiest work.

First of all, they couldn't forgive the fact that I was put there and their buddies were dismissed. I don't know what the Lagerfuhrer saw in me, but in the evenings, when he went across the kitchen towards their dining room, he always asked me how I was doing. I was wondering how a man like him could become an SS. He seemed such a good man. They told me later that he was a merchant from Hamburg. You can imagine the kitchen.

There were 700-liter boilers, which I had to clean inside and out. Besides, I had to take the slag out into the slop-pails, clean the furnace chamber completely and fill it with coal every morning. I had to push up 600 kilograms of coal to the kitchen. It was winter and it was slippery, so I went more backwards than I went forward. And in the evening I had to clean that huge kitchen. Surely, I wasn't happy in the kitchen at all.

At that time I became friends with Piri [Piroska Roth]. She came in my friend, Stefi's place. Stefi was taken a couple of days before, as she was said to be pregnant. Every pregnant woman was requested to present herself because she would get double portion.

She wasn't pregnant, because we were on good terms and she was honest with me. She wasn't pregnant, but she still couldn't resist the offer because she was hungry and the double portion came in handy. I implored her in vain not to accept it because I figured she would pay a high price for it.

The pleasure lasted for about two weeks. Then they came and gathered these and took them to the gas chambers. She gave me a pocketknife and told me, 'If I don't come back, it's yours, if I come back, I'll get it back from you'. She didn't come back. I never saw her again.

Piri came in her place. I was on as good terms with Piri as with Stefi. Piri was on the 'Revier' [German for sickroom]. She was let out of the Revier, but her block had been closed, and because Stefi's place was free, she was assigned there.

I was in the barrack when she came in and told me that she had been assigned there. It was very interesting, because she came in, reached under her coat, took a potato out and wanted to give it to me. I told her not to give it to me, because I could not give her anything in return. But she insisted on it, until I accepted the potato from her.

This way I was quite obliged to her. She was quite unfortunate, because her husband had left for America, they had first got married, but she couldn't go after him, because by the time her husband had arranged all the papers, so that his wife could go after him, it wasn't possible to go at all.

So she ended up in Auschwitz with her parents. To cut a long story short, I became very good friends with this companion of mine. One needed someone to talk to, because it was very awful there. By then it was very cold, and sometimes we even slept together on my plank bed, because we could warm up each other that way. She had a blanket and I did too, and that way we had two blankets on top of us, we even covered our heads. There were countless mice; they ran up and down the blanket and everywhere. It was horrible.

When I worked in the kitchen I stole everything I could - sugar and jam, milk powder - and I gave them to Piri. She always came to the rear of the kitchen and I gave her everything I got hold of that day. I pushed a barrow of coal into the barrack because Piri was there, so that she wouldn't be cold.

We had to hide that too, because if they had found it that would have been horror. I was in the kitchen for about a month, because then the Lagerfuhrer left.

I knew full well that if he left, I would be dismissed from there at once, because this was something unnatural. And this was exactly what happened. Then the hide-and-seek started again: which group would I be assigned to? Then everything started again: going to work, the daily Zellappell, seeing where I would go, what kind of work I would get, how much I had to walk and with whom, because it meant a great deal which woman was assigned to the group, which group I got into.

Among these German overseers there were some who repelled everyone. They gave them all a nickname, so this woman's name was Cramp. The woman who hated me so much in the kitchen also took groups to work. Her name was Greti, Grete. To my bad luck after being dismissed from the kitchen I was assigned to her group. So I tried very hard not to give her a reason to pick on me, but she was always trying to do me harm.

By this time we had been there for at least a year. [Though this period might have seemed immensely long to the interviewee, in fact only a few months had passed since their deportation]. They took us to a place where there was a big mountain, rails and a freight car.

So we had to shovel earth from one place to the other until it reached the car, and the last one threw the earth into the car. I didn't pick and choose for a long time, I just stood next to the car and I was the one who shoveled the earth into the car.

It wasn't an easy job, because it was easier to shovel the earth from one place to the other, and when I had to throw it up, and I don't know how many times an hour I had to do it, I got exhausted many times. I tried to stop when Cramp saw me, so that she wouldn't think that I wasn't doing anything when she wasn't looking.

Then I don't know how many times we went day after day. I didn't even try going somewhere else, because as a matter of fact I didn't have anything against her. I did my job properly and she left me alone.

However, walking was quite difficult, because after doing it for I don't know how many days I got very exhausted. I told the liaison to tell the woman to let me rest for half an hour, because I wouldn't be able to walk back. The woman told me that she wouldn't tell her, because she didn't want to watch Cramp beat me to death.

I told her, 'Don't bother about what she is going to do, that's my problem, it's all the same to me if she beats me to death now or on the way.' And I told her, 'If you don't tell her, I ask someone who speaks German and she will tell her.' So she was forced to tell her.

Cramp said that I could lie down. I only asked for half an hour, and when I thought that the half an hour had passed, I sat up and wanted to stand up, but she came and made me a sign that I could stay, and that I would only have to get up when she whistled. And she let me lie under the tree until we set off for the Lager.

This woman told the liaison that she couldn't imagine what Grete's problem was with me, because she handed me over to her telling her to watch out for me, because I was lazy. While this woman said that I was the best worker in the whole team.

Winter came and I started making turbans, because we were cold. We marched to the workplace bare headed in the terrible cold, and it was so cold, that icicles were hanging from our heads. We had no coat or stockings on our feet. My leg was shiny like a mirror, and red like a roast, and swollen.

Food was like drinking water to me. It was substantial only at the beginning, and then it fell off very quickly. The food became worse and worse. At the end I could say that we ate lukewarm water. There wasn't even a gram of salt in it, there wasn't anything at all in it. Turnips were floating in it, three-four pieces, and that was it.

There wasn't any fat or salt in it. It wasn't substantial at all. Our life was terribly uncertain. We had no topics to talk about, we only talked about cooking and eating, and that's how we indulged ourselves. We had no coats all winter, and then in April they gave us coats, and told us that everyone should undo one sleeve and give it to someone else. The coats indicated that we were prisoners. Every coat had to be of a different color.

Then on 10th April [1945] they didn't take us to work, but they grouped us and set us off. We went on foot, then they put us on trains. There was a German soldier in every car guarding us. They didn't give us anything to eat. We traveled in the car, and in the end we stopped in Lubeck.

Everyone was very hungry, we became quite weak, and those who wanted could get off, and some scratched about the garbage heap for some food. We were in Lubeck for a couple days at the railroad station, and then suddenly they started the car. It turned out -because there was always someone who heard what the Germans were talking about - that they set off because their enemy, not ours, was getting closer. If they had left us there, we would have been set free that day, but unfortunately they took us on to flee with them.

The train was on its way, and then the tragedy started, when American dive- bombers in groups of three appeared in the sky and fired at the car. Needless to say, the train stopped on open track and everyone started jumping off the car.

Those who jumped off remained there in a pile, one on top of another, because in the meantime they were shooting with machine guns. I went out all the way to the plateau of the car, where one stands before getting off. I slipped out all the way, so that they couldn't push me off, and I looked around to see how I could jump off, because we were terribly high up. The car was on a high embankment, and under it there was a deep ditch.

There was nothing to be done; I measured slowly and leisurely until I finally jumped down. Some kind of a miracle happened, because I didn't hurt myself at all. I felt maybe for the first and last time in my life as if my mother had taken me in her arms and put me down carefully.

Everyone ran where they could. The Germans of course were shouting that nobody should leave, and that if we stayed there we would be liberated. We let ourselves be led like cattle, and that had always been the problem: that we always gave in. We sat about for a couple of hours, and the Germans rushed and ran to drive us together, so that not even one of us would leave.

They attacked the train in which we were in two waves, but nobody got hurt. When we set off we left the injured there, and they cried 'Don't leave us here! Take us along! Don't let us die here!' But nobody cared about them.

Then we traveled for a while, and sometime at night or in the evening we arrived at a railroad station. They got us off the train and set off with us on foot, and we settled in a forest. We spent the night there. The next morning they took us to the railroad station and put us on trains. When we were all in the car, someone shouted 'don't give in, because they want to blow up the car, it is cease-fire and they are not allowed to shoot!' We jumped all off the cars like automates.

They weren't allowed to shoot, so they started hosing us to drive us back in the car, but we didn't give in. We swam in the water, but didn't go in the car. Suffice it to say this lasted quite a long while until we became settled. The boss of the Lager didn't force us anymore, and led us back to the forest where we had spent the previous night. In the morning, at daybreak we looked around and it turned out that there weren't any Germans around us. The German soldiers and German women who had been watching us had all disappeared.

They didn't care for us at all. After that nobody cared for us. English soldiers came, but they weren't invaders, only passers-through, so they didn't care for us either. I was very desperate; I was walking on the road and didn't see any soldiers, only civilians, because everyone threw away everything that could remind them of the fact that they were once soldiers.

There was an Italian Lager, and we set off to find something. At the garbage heap we found all kinds of rotten potatoes and cabbage leaves and we gathered things like that. One brought this, the other one brought that, one got hold of some instant soup, the other one of frozen fish. It was eight of us who assembled and I told them that I could cook, because I hadn't been able to get hold of anything. So I cooked food in a slop-pail, which had everything in it, from frozen fish to cabbage leaf onwards, and what we could gather at the garbage heap.

We didn't get sick, probably because the food didn't have any fat in it, only vegetables. Then they gathered us again, and took us to a Lager, which looked like a hospital; there were white iron beds with mattresses and duvets. There was even a table in the middle of the room.

Everyone had their own bed, and we could live in normal circumstances. I only know that I still didn't have anything to eat, I couldn't get hold of anything, so someone gave me some mustard, and someone else gave me some frozen fish, but I had nothing else to eat. I put the mustard on the frozen fish and I ate a soup-plate full of frozen fish. I fell very sick.

And later, when they distributed food, I couldn't eat, because I had an upset stomach. The most beautiful was, that it didn't make me sad, and I kept saying that it was good that I had an upset stomach, because that way I could save the food and that I would have enough later.

They distributed canned food in boxes, these were meant as provision for the soldiers for 24 hours: stock cube, chocolate, biscuit, milk powder, sugar and such things. By the time I was feeling better, I wasn't so hungry anymore: I couldn't eat all the food at once, because one usually wants more than she is able to take.

Then they transported us from here too. The English army liberated us, because the English occupied these territories. They transported us with trucks to the shore of the Eastern Sea; I don't recall the name of the place anymore.

They occupied a private territory where there were cottages, weekend houses. They put us up in these weekend houses. These houses were all furnished in a different way; there was a kitchen in all of them, some of them with a hot plate, some with a stove. Some got together and cooked together.

By then my friend Piri wasn't with me anymore. As soon as we were liberated she made contact with the English leaders, because her husband was an American soldier. So after we were set free she went straight to America.

She was very nice, because before leaving she told me to write a letter to whomever I wanted, and that she would send it along. Besides that she brought me shoes and everything she could get hold of, because she had more possibilities, more freedom of movement. We corresponded until her death.

So after Piri left, another companion of mine and I decided that we would get on well. I didn't want communal accommodation, because I'd had enough of the crowd. We occupied the attic of a summer cottage. We could climb up there on a chicken ladder.

One could straighten out only in one spot, at its pointed spot. It had a window, too. This tiny room was very skillfully furnished, because there was everything one needed. The sea was in front of us. If we looked out the window, there were two ships slanting aside, sunk.

One was 'Deutschland,' a German ship, the other one was a Dutch ship, 'Kapakona.' We were told that the two ships had been blown up. People started to escape from the ship, because it wasn't far from the shore. But those who tried to swim were shot. I didn't see this; I only saw the bodies, because they were washed ashore.

All the bloated bodies lay there, they were snow-white, as the salt ate into them. They were five times bigger, than normal, they were so bloated. I didn't even go to the shore, I said, 'I'm getting sick at the sight of this.'

They brought us raw food every day. They distributed meat or fish or vegetables, and everyone could do with it what they liked. We weren't starving anymore, but our bodies were very starved. For example once I was so hungry that I couldn't sleep, so I got up in the middle of the night and cooked a pot of oatmeal. I woke my companion and we sat next to it and ate all of it. Then we went to bed and could sleep, because we had got enough.

I made up all kinds of things out of this raw food. I made stuffed cabbage for example, with stock cube and oatmeal. I made up things like this every day, so I always cooked something different. My friend was from Romania, from Nagyvarad, and she was a skillful woman, an English tailor. We sewed all the time, of course by hand, because I had no machine.

We were wearing rags; while we were in the Lager we had worn the same rag. You can imagine in what a condition that was by the time we were liberated. There were some, who couldn't sew, so they got hold of some material, and in exchange for food we sewed for them. We even got cigarettes.

The woman who was our interpreter in the labor camp was our leader here, too; we worked for her the most. She moved into the nicest summer cottage, and there were a lot of things there. We worked very much; we even made suitcases out of fabric. Everyone tried to get herself something, to get dressed by the time we would set off.

However there were no transports, it didn't even occur to them that they should take us home. We were set free in May, but in July we were still there. They organized a transport for the Czechs, but nobody organized a transport for the Hungarians. The Hungarians were not taken home by anybody; they only organized a Hungarian transport in 1946.

I didn't know that the Czechs were taken to Bohemia [Czechoslovakia] via Budapest. If I had known I would have got home a couple of months earlier. Soon they gathered us, too because they evacuated the area. They put us again on trucks and took us to Neustadt.

It wasn't very good there, because we got very small rooms and there were more of us in a room. But there we had freedom of movement; everyone could go wherever she wanted. With this companion of mine I decided to go to other Lagers to see if we could find anyone we knew or some relatives.

I had no idea if I had anyone from my family left. I believed that my parents had stayed at home. I didn't know what had happened to my child, I didn't know what had happened to my husband. Then an ambulance came to Neustadt, and it turned out that it was going to Bergen-Belsen, and it took us along.

There were many 'Haftlinge' [German for prisoners] gathered at an army post. They also went there from here and there, and almost all of those who had been at the Bergen-Belsen camp initially died. It turned out that the women from Kispest who had gone to Bergen-Belsen all died. [Thousands died even in the last weeks, after the liberation around 30 thousand prisoners died of

hunger and illnesses].

Those, who didn't go down with typhoid, were put among the sick ones to die, because at that time there weren't any crematoriums anymore, they didn't burn the bodies, so they killed people any way they could.

As it turned out, all of my acquaintances died there, in Bergen-Belsen. It was thanks to a slap in the face that I didn't leave with that transport. At that time I wanted to stay together with the women from Kispest, but I got a huge slap in the face, because I didn't turn around when the German said, 'Face about!' It was thanks to this slap that I survived, because this way I was taken elsewhere.

Here, in Bergen-Belsen they didn't really take care of us, it was kind of a temporary accommodation. I met two or three people from Kispest who survived, and we discussed that we should set off for home somehow.

Then we met a group, which was Romanian. Their leader was a very smart man, and he agreed that we should join them. We were lucky, because nobody really liked Hungarians. Wherever we went he always told us to keep quiet, so they wouldn't know that we were Hungarians.

- **Post-war**

We left in August, I don't know what day, but it took a long time to get home. First we went to Hanover. When we arrived somewhere we always looked for the offices where the Jewish Haftlinge got money. But the money was useless; we didn't get anything for it. Wherever we went there were burnt- out houses everywhere.

We traveled in cattle cars, on top of a train filled with coal; sometimes we even traveled on a bumper. We could wash ourselves at the railroad stations. Sometimes they pushed us off the train. I was lucky not to hurt myself, because my backpack was on my back and I fell on it. Before the train set off again, I climbed back on again.

There were times when I traveled all night on a platform and I could only put one foot on the ground, because there wasn't any more room. We arranged for food before we left. There were five or six of us, women, from Pest.

As long as I had food, I always offered some to everyone else, but when I ran out of mine, nobody thought of giving me some. They ate secretly, so they wouldn't have to share with anyone else. Only my companion and I ate and took care of each other equally.

So, with great difficulties we arrived in Pozsony. It was evening there and we saw Russian soldiers already. As a matter of fact I had already seen the Russian soldiers in the cars. What they did all night! They went through all the cars and took people's baggage.

My backpack was put in the passageway. They trampled on it all night, but nobody thought of picking it up. So my backpack and everything inside it was spared. By daybreak this looting ceased. Then we arrived at Keleti station. There they received us, and gave us each a slice of bread with jam.

They took us on horse carriages - at that time, they used those - to the school on Dozsa Gyorgy Street, which they had equipped for the Haftlinge, and they told me, 'here is a plank bed, it's yours.' I thought that if I had to spend the night there because I didn't have anyone to go to, I would kill myself. 'It can't be true that I must go on like this.' I endured all this in the hope to meet my family.

Two of my mother's sisters lived the closest to Dozsa Gyorgy Street, and I set off to look for them. I found two of my aunts and my uncle and his children. They had been in the ghetto [the Budapest ghetto], 7 but had been liberated in January or February already, and went home. I told them that I wanted to go to my sister's to Kispest, to find her, because I hoped that she was alive and my parents, too.

My aunts didn't know anything about my sister, or about anyone for that matter. My two aunts came with me, and we went to look for my sister. My sister wasn't at home at that time. My aunt told me to go back to Pest with them and sleep at their place. I was about to get on the streetcar to go back with my aunts, when people I knew got off; people with whom I went to Auschwitz together, but they were taken elsewhere.

They were very happy to see me, and told me to sleep at their place. I told my two aunts, that I would rather sleep at my acquaintances', even if I didn't find my sister that day, because the next morning I had to report myself officially here, in Kispest, where I had been taken from.

Then we went together to see if my sister had arrived home in the meantime. Thank God, she had suffered no harm; thanks to her Christian husband, she was not harmed. You can imagine her joy! The truth is that I was very indifferent, I couldn't be happy about anything. I stayed at my sister's and didn't go with the acquaintances anymore.

On the first day there weren't any problems, because my sister told me that she had heard news about my son, and he was alive. It turned out that my parents had been deported, which I didn't know about. In the meantime it turned out that my husband hadn't come back either, so I didn't have him either anymore. But when I found out that my son was alive, I thought, 'Thank God, at least my child is alive, and I can bear the blow.'

Then, in a couple days, husbands of women who had been taken to Bergen-Belsen came to me, and they told me, that they had been with my child. I found out from them that my child was no longer alive. It turned out that he had left with a transport for the ill, but he wasn't ill, he was just very attached to a man from Kispest, whom he knew from home. This was a very wealthy man, he was a merchant here in Kispest and he had a shop.

This man was a deputy, a very cultured, intelligent man, and my child liked to be around him. Everyone needed someone to talk to. Everyone needed someone to belong to. Those who didn't have a child, sister, brother, mother or father or I don't know whom, made friends with acquaintances.

I was the only one from my [immediate] family who came home, nobody else. My brother was killed with his family. They killed his six-year-old son, his wife and him. The fact that my sister survived is a miracle, because many of those who remained at home perished too, because there was bombing and the siege and things like that.

My sister didn't feel the danger she was in. She was just waiting for us to come home. She always hoped that my child would come home. Starting with the jam, which was my child's favorite, she made everything. She was planning with her husband to send him to school.

I got home with nothing but the clothes on me. Strangers lived in my house, and they received me with such hostility, as if I were I don't know what. My sin was that the house was mine. Five families lived in my house, and the occupants of the house were bossing everyone about like the communists. I wasn't even able to put in a word. I couldn't go to stay there.

My sister told me to stay with them, of course. But as a matter of fact I was in an awful state then. I lost my confidence. It is very difficult to remember this, because this is an awful period of my life, I couldn't get over all that had happened; it wasn't possible in a short time.

My only desire was to die, because I thought that I couldn't survive this. My sister could hardly raise my spirit. I was only sorry for my sister, because she was so happy that I had arrived, and she had a lot of plans.

She had opened the shop before I arrived, because she had got a notice that relatives could open the shops which had been closed before, but if nobody opened them from the family they would have been given to someone else.

To make sure that my shop wouldn't be lost, she opened it, but it had been completely robbed. Nobody wanted hats; they started making Russian soldier caps. They went with a truck in front of the shop for the caps. Those who were smart could get hold of many things in this period, but my sister was afraid of everything. Once a Russian soldier brought her a bag of flour, but she didn't accept it.

I just looked at things totally helplessly. I didn't hope for anything. My life became empty. When I entered the shop it was as if it hadn't been mine, as if I were a stranger. I was a stranger in my sister's house; I was a stranger in my shop.

My trade wasn't worth anything anymore, nobody wore hats, they were happy if they had food, and didn't think of wearing a hat. Everyone wore shawls. Rich, poor, everyone wore shawls. At first I tried to fit into my sister's life. I went to the shop, kept my sister's household, went shopping, cooked, cleaned. They were busy all day long. They had their office in Pest, her husband was an architect, and worked all over the place and my sister managed the office.

They had very much work, because of the reconstruction, because the whole country was in ruins. The construction engineers had a lot of work. They had their income too; they didn't feel the need of anything.

I can't complain either, because they were respecting all my desires. I didn't want to give up the shop, because I was hoping to get on somehow. One shop had been given up anyway, the one which had been my husband's. If I had opened that one, I would have been luckier with it, because textile shops were still going well, but the hat shop wasn't.

So I kept the shop until around 1947, I paid the rent. I had no income, and 90 percent of my wealth got lost, because all the things I gave to this and that got lost; I didn't get anything back. The

Russians took everything. And even if it wasn't the Russian who took it, people still said it was the Russians [while in reality they had taken it themselves]. My poor father gave many things from the shop to different people, so that he would have something after the war. But we didn't get anything back from those either. All my jewelry got lost, too.

My sister bought a partly ruined condominium. Their plan was to repair it, sell it and buy another one. When they finished repairing a room and the kitchen of their condominium they moved in, and gave me their house in Kispest.

This was a very nice two-bedroom-house, with all modern conveniences, a single house in a garden full of fruit trees. In the meantime I sold my house too, because it was pointless to do anything with it. I couldn't have satisfied the occupiers, I couldn't have given a house to them to win my house back.

So I gave it away for almost free. I sold the shop too, but I was luckier with it, because the shop wasn't mine, I only rented it. I sold the rented property for almost as much as my house, my five-bedroom-house with a 151 square meter plot.

As a matter of fact I took over my sister's house before I got married to my second husband. My second husband, Jozsef Barsony, was a single young man. At this time there were many men and women who wanted to marry, because in the deportation many of them had lost their wife or husband. But I didn't want to marry someone who had had a wife and child.

I didn't want to hear all the time about what his wife or children had been like, or to raise his child as poorly as I was raised, because my mother didn't raise me. I had several suitors, but I chose whom I chose because he had never had a wife or a child, and had no desire for a child.

I wasn't in love at all with my second husband either. He loved me in his own way, married me, but he still lived his own life, which didn't bother me at all. My husband liked to entertain. I was rather inclined to recall my memories, and it was very good that he was able to raise my spirit.

I always went along with him, because he didn't go anywhere without me. He was known everywhere. At the Moulin Rouge the crowd was standing outside, they couldn't get in, but if he saw us, the doorman waved at us. I had to watch every show, whether I liked it or not.

My second husband was also Jewish, but he had converted, because he thought that it would help him avoid deportation. But he was deported just as if he hadn't converted. He lost his mother, because they were taken to the ghetto. His mother survived the ghetto, but when they went back to their own house, there were no windows, she got a cold, and then she got pneumonia and died.

By the time her son came home she had already died. He had an older brother, born in 1901. When we got married he told me to convert. I told him, 'I went through with the whole deportation, I lost all my family and came home alone.

Do you seriously think that I will convert now? I haven't the slightest intention of doing so.' We only had a civil marriage, and not a church ceremony. They asked us if we wanted a 'reversale' [Reversale -the marrying parties agree on which parent's religion their children to be born would follow.] We didn't. I didn't have the slightest intention of giving birth to a child, even though I was

still young, but I just didn't want to. And besides I couldn't imagine my husband raising a child.

My husband didn't want to live in Kispest, so we only lived there for a year. It was very difficult to advertise and exchange the house somehow. The one who swapped with me was luckier with the swap, because I got for my house only a one and a half-bedroom-apartment in the 7th district, and we had to spend a lot of money to make it habitable.

I didn't want to move because so many things tied me to that neighborhood... Then I thought that maybe it would be better for me, because I could get rid of my memories, if I didn't stay in Kispest. But I know now that one can't get rid of herself, but carries her memories along. I only know that there isn't any moment of the day when I don't remember my family members, all those whom I had and who left me, especially my child, who would be 70 years old now, if he were alive, but his short life only lasted for 15 years.

When I met my husband he had been a taxi owner. At that time the taxi license could be inherited from the parents, and his father had three children and three licenses. Every child got a license. My husband rented his older brother's license and his older sister's license, so he had three cars running.

I had no reason to complain because I wasn't lacking anything materially. But soon after, he became a class enemy because of his taxis, because he didn't hand in his cars to the co-operative, and they took his license earlier, and he could hardly find a job as a taxi driver.

In 1956 8 we didn't take part in anything, but his boss dismissed my husband, he would have dismissed him even earlier, because my husband always criticized the boss. The boss took a couple of men, who had really done something, and said, 'If you speak against Barsony, if you say this and write that, than you can keep your job'. So after the revolution they took his license. At first he couldn't get a proper job, only one as a car washer.

This was very difficult, because there were all kinds of gas, petrol vapor, exhaust gas. He came home and told me, that he wouldn't go there anymore. I told him, 'If you don't go to work anymore, then your benefactors will say that you don't want to work for this regime. You must work, whether you like it or not. But it isn't your duty to work where you feel the worse. Work where you can get fresh air and that's it.' So he went to work somehow, and suffered no harm.

Then a more permissive period came, and one could get his license back, and he became a truck driver, a trucker. He liked to work, he was only sorry about not going to work as a truck driver earlier. He would have made a lot more money. The point is that he was a skillful man. He quickly found his feet everywhere. I really wouldn't have needed to work, because he earned as much as we needed.

1956 was rather exciting for me because my Icuka [Icuka is the daughter of Erzsebet Barsony's sister, Margit Toth.] was born then. I really wanted her, because I didn't want a child. My sister divorced her husband, and had a boyfriend who didn't want the child; he already had a child, and wasn't a good father to him either.

They could have had three children before, but she had aborted all three. I convinced her to give birth to this one. And besides my sister was so much in love with that man. The relationship lasted

for five years, but I knew it wouldn't last. And 1956 came, which nobody had counted on and the man emigrated.

He broke up with her and emigrated the day the baby was born. I wanted the child, because my sister would have been capable of killing herself because of this man, and I couldn't be around her all the time.

After that she didn't want anyone anymore. This was such a big love for her that nobody could replace him. She was 37 when her daughter was born, and lived her life without ever having a man again. Her former husband wanted to marry her again, and he would have taken her with her daughter. She didn't go back to him. Then she raised the girl with my help. It felt just like the girl was mine.

I was at home until 1953. My husband didn't want me to work, but I told him that I wanted to have my own pension later. It didn't matter to me at all what I was doing, or how much I was paid. I went to a co-operative, which was very close to our house. I worked there for ten years. We made toys, plastic toys and carpets, and we cut painter rollers as well. I went to work even after I retired [in 1963], because I had a possibility then to run a knitwear works, the Reitter knitwear works.

The owners were Jewish too, but the kind that had stopped observing religion. They told me that I didn't have to do anything but sell the existing clothes. The shop was a co- tenancy, there was a tailor, a man who made ladies' wear, blouses, and in the meantime he sold their knitwear.

They shared the shop-window, and they shared the shop. The twist sweaters came in fashion at that time. [Twist sweater: a slipover, long sleeved, V-neck, woolen sweater, which was considered almost a uniform among the youth (Kozák Gyula: Lábjegyzetek a hatvanas évek Magyarországa monográfiához /manuscript/)].

I was a businesswoman, and I knew that something had to be done, that one had to grasp whatever came about. I thought that I shouldn't sit there idly and wait for the customers, when nobody wanted what we had. I bought the thread, had it knitted, assembled and then I sold it, and this went on unceasingly.

Meanwhile they bought other things, too. The shop prospered. I was there until the age of 60. I could have been there longer, but I couldn't stand that couple. They kept making a fool of the employees and they never paid them on time. Then I noticed that they were mistrustful, and I wouldn't put up with that. They begged me in vain to go back, but I didn't.

After the war, even though my husband was converted, we observed Jewish traditions. We paid the Jewish community tax, went to the synagogue, and we had our seat in the synagogue. We didn't keep this in secret during 1956 either. When my husband died, we buried him according to the Jewish tradition in the Jewish cemetery in Rakoskeresztur.

I have never been a party member. When I came home from the deportation my sister told me that all who had come home from the deportation joined the Socialist Party [that is, the Hungarian Communist Party]. I told her, that they could join it, but I wouldn't join anything.

My husband was thinking about emigrating to Israel, but I didn't want to. I told him that I had built a home already. I told him to go, and if he succeeded I would go after him. But he knew full well, that I wouldn't go.

So we never went to Israel, even though we had relatives there, my first husband's youngest sister, who had emigrated already in 1939 with her two children and her husband. We kept in touch of course. We also talked about emigrating to South America, though I didn't really want to. It was already after the war. We had everything set, but the papers our relative sent us from Brazil were embezzled.

My only journey abroad was in 1967 when I went to visit my friend Piri [in the USA]. She was waiting for me at the airport, we met and all the staff flocked around us, the personnel of the airplane, a lot of people, and they hugged and kissed us.

What happened was that while Piri was waiting at the airport, she told a couple of employees the way we had met, and they found the story so touching, that when I arrived they welcomed us, standing around us.

At that time Piri's entire family was alive, and they were all in Pennsylvania. We were invited elsewhere every day... I visited her once more before her death, in 1995, she was very happy, and I was too. This was our last encounter.

After 1989 nothing changed. They still idolize money, and there are still poor and rich people. However, there is no middle class anymore. I don't complain, because I live on my pension, I get a pension from Germany, and I also get life-annuity from the Hungarian State. I am a saver; I don't even spend my pension.

I came to live here because of my sister's daughter, because I lived in the 7th district and I had a much bigger apartment. But this suits me; I don't need a bigger one. What would I want it for being by myself?

- **Glossary:**

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

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

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

It also forbade Jews to buy or sell land and so forth. This law already defined Jews on more racial grounds in that it regarded baptized children that had at least one non-converted Jewish parent as

Jewish. The third Jewish law prohibited intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews, and defined anyone who had at least one Jewish grandparent as Jewish.

2 Russian Revolution of 1917: Revolution, in which the tsarist regime was overthrown in the Russian Empire and, under Lenin, was replaced by the Bolshevik rule. The two phases of the Revolution were:

February Revolution, which came about due to food and fuel shortages during World War I, and during which the tsar abdicated and a provisional government took over. The second phase took place in the form of a coup led by Lenin in October/November (October Revolution) and saw the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks.

3 Hungarian Soviet Republic: The first, short-lived, proletarian dictatorship in Hungary. On 21st March 1919 the Workers' Council of Budapest took over power from the bourgeois democratic government and declared the Hungarian Soviet Republic.

The temporary constitution declared that the Republic was the state of the workers and peasants and it aimed at putting an end to their exploitation and establishing a socialist economic and social system.

The communist government nationalized industrial and commercial enterprises, and socialized housing, transport, banking, medicine, cultural institutions, and large landholdings. In an effort to secure its rule the government used arbitrary violence.

Revolutionary tribunals ordered almost 600 executions and the government also resorted to violence to expropriate grain from peasants. This violence and the regime's moves against the clergy also shocked many Hungarians. The Republic was defeated by the entry of Romanian troops, who broke through Hungarian lines on 30th July, occupied and looted Budapest, and ousted Kun's Soviet Republic on 1st August 1919.

4 Civil school: This type of school was created in 1868. Originally it was intended to be a secondary school but in its finally established format, it did not provide a secondary level education with graduation (maturity examination).

Pupils attended it for four years after finishing elementary school. As opposed to classical secondary school, the emphasis in the civil school was on modern and practical subjects (e.g. modern languages, accounting, economics).

While the secondary school prepared children to enter university, the civil school provided its graduates with the type of knowledge which helped them find a job in offices, banks, as clerks, accountants, secretaries, or to manage their own business or shop.

5 Anschluss: The annexation of Austria to Germany. The 1919 peace treaty of St. Germain prohibited the Anschluss, to prevent a resurgence of a strong Germany. On 12th March 1938 Hitler occupied Austria, and with popular approval, annexed it as the province of Ostmark.

In April 1945 Austria regained independence, which was legalized in the Austrian State Treaty in 1955

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 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.

8 1956- It designates the Revolution, which started on 23rd October 1956 against Soviet rule and the communists in Hungary.

It was started by student and worker demonstrations in Budapest and began with the destruction of Stalin's gigantic statue. Moderate communist leader Imre Nagy was appointed as prime minister and he promised reform and democratization.

The Soviet Union withdrew its troops, which had been stationed in Hungary since the end of World War II, but they returned after Nagy's declaration that Hungary would pull out of the Warsaw Pact to pursue a policy of neutrality. The Soviet army put an end to the uprising on 4th November and mass repression and arrests began.

About 200,000 Hungarians fled from the country. Nagy and a number of his supporters were executed. Until 1989 and the fall of the communist regime, the Revolution of 1956 was officially considered a counter-revolution.