Gabriela Brodska

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Carlsbad
Czech Republic
Interviewer: Barbora Pokreis
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Mrs. Gabriela Brodska lives in Carlsbad in a small but cozily furnished apartment. The mother of her former son-in-law, Mrs. Blaouva, who is 95, is her roommate. Mrs. Brodska was born in the year 1924 in Roznava; after World War II she moved to Carlsbad. The interview took place over two sittings. Mrs. Brodska told us her story in the Czech language with the occasional use of Slovak and Hungarian expressions. Due to the serious nature of her state of health we ended the interview prematurely at her request.

My family background

Of my grandparents I remember my grandmother, my father's mother, and my maternal grandfather. I don't know how long my father's family lived there where my father was born [Zadorfalva, today Hungary], they lived in that village since time immemorial. I don't know when they then moved to Miskolc. My grandma was named Fannika [Fanni] Roth. My grandmother on my father's side died early on, I was 15 [1939]. Grandma lived in Miskolc [a city in Eastern Hungary] and I was born and lived in Czechoslovakia [see First Czechoslovak Republic] 1. My brother [Ladislav Roth] and I used to go visit her during summer vacation. The poor thing died early, she was around 60. Grandpa was named Roth, but unfortunately I don't know his first name. I didn't know him either; he died long before, in the year 1918. And I wasn't born until six years later. I'm sure I used to know his name, but I just don't remember any more.

We visited Grandma every year. We used to go to her place for summer vacation. She lived in this duplex house. My aunt [Paula Fischer, nee Roth] lived with her. There were three apartments there. In one of them lived my aunt, Grandma's daughter, with her family, and my grandma lived in the second apartment, also in a two-room apartment, and then there was one more apartment that consisted of one room with a kitchen. Plus a courtyard and garden, but she didn't keep any animals. It was this typical family house. Miskolc wasn't a very big city in those days, around 60,000 people or something like that. [Editor's note: in 1920 Miskolc had 57,000 inhabitants, 20 percent of who were Jews.] Grandma's house was close to the center, a few meters away.

She was a great grandmother, I loved her very much. A great grandmother! She was this typical grandma, like the grandma in the book by Bozena Nemcova 2. As far as religion goes, my grandma was assimilated. They had a farm; they didn't move to Miskolc until later. They had a field, and they had livestock, and the livestock had to be fed on Saturdays and Sundays and on holidays as well. And the cows had to be milked, so some observance of holidays and customs under those circumstances wasn't all that possible. [Editor's note: this indicates that the interviewee is not familiar with all Jewish laws regarding the observance of Sabbath. During this holiday it is forbidden to work, but the feeding and milking of livestock is allowed. However, the milk that is collected by milking during holidays cannot be consumed.]

My grandfather on my mother's side was named Jakub Kraus. Grandpa was 74 when he died [1937], and I was about 13 at the time. My grandpa on my mother's side originally lived in Zlate [a town in today's Eastern Slovakia in the county of Bardejov], and they had a store there, one of those typical village stores, where they sold absolutely everything: sugar, bread, petroleum and everything. Grandma was named Etel Weberova [Etel Krausova, nee Weberova]. I never knew her; she died at the age of 56. She got a brain hemorrhage, so when I was born, she was no longer alive. Grandma's father - my mother told me this - worked as an estate manager for a count in Szepes and his father also worked there. [Editor's note: Szepes is the Hungarian name for the Spis region in Slovakia. According to information from the State Archive in Levoc (under which Spis belongs) at that time there were three noble families living in that region: Andrassy, Csaky and Thurzo. Because the surname Weber was very common in the region, we were not able to ascertain from the information gained for which of these nobles he worked as estate manager.] They were natives of that region, who had apparently lived there for a long time already. If he had a function like that he must have been born there and lived there a long time.

We went to Zlate once to have a look around. Grandpa's place was this typical village house. I think that it had two rooms and a kitchen. This typical village house, only one story. When we were there my grandpa was no longer alive, and the current owner wasn't at home, so we only looked in through the windows. Grandpa lived with us because he was a widower. At that time we were already living in Roznava. I was already born in Roznava. My grandparents sold everything in Zlate that they owned and moved here, because there was no school there, only up to the fourth grade [see People's and Public schools in Czechoslovakia] 3, and they had three children that were going to school. So they moved to Roznava. There they then bought a larger house. My mother was married here and my brother and I were already born in Roznava, so I'm a Roznava native. Grandpa loved me very much. He didn't call me by any other name than 'arany-virag' [Hungarian - my golden flower]. Well, my grandpa had five grandchildren, so I felt that he was very emotionally fixated on me. Sometimes Grandpa spoke Hungarian with us, and sometimes Slovak, according to the situation.

My mother was born in the Hungarian part of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. She was born in the village of Zlatow [then the name of the town of Zlate, in the county of Bardejov]. My mother was named Jolanka Rothova, nee Krausova. My father was named Jeno, in Czech Evzen Roth. He was born in the village of Zadorfalva, and then later they moved to Miskolc. They had a farm in Zadorfalva. My father was 33 when I was born. I know that on 1st May 1924 he was 33. My mother was six years younger than he was.

My father was a beautiful person, but unfortunately died at the age of 42 of kidney failure. He was a person that couldn't say no to anyone. It was common, when someone wanted to buy a pig: 'Mr. Roth, please lend me five crowns!' My father always pulled out his wallet, even though we weren't rich. I remember him very well; I loved my father very much. I remember that for his funeral, people from nearby villages came to pay their respects. He was very well-liked and respected. He was buried by the rabbi, my brother couldn't say the Kaddish, he was only 11, so he couldn't. [Editor's note: The Kaddish, prayer for the dead, can be recited by a son for his parents only upon reaching the age of 13, after his bar mitzvah.] The rabbi spoke, he said goodbye. My father was buried in Roznava in the Jewish cemetery. But after the war that cemetery was destroyed and the remains were transferred to a Christian cemetery.

Today there's no Jewish cemetery in Roznava; there aren't any Jews there either [according to information from the Central Union of Slovak Jewish Religious Communities, to this day (2005) there lives at least one person professing the Jewish faith]. Now there's this special section there. After all, it's all the same to the dead. In death we're all equal, and in life we should be too. I looked for his grave when I was last in Roznava, at that time part of the cemetery was still there. I found my father's grave and that of my grandparents - my mother's parents. My father had a very nice gravestone made of Swedish granite and when they transported him [from the Jewish cemetery to the Christian one], my friends wrote me that the gravestone had been lost and then they didn't know whose grave it was.

My father was one of ten children: seven boys and three girls. All seven boys graduated from high school, though at that time there was no bus or train connection to Zadorfalva, which is a small village. They had to walk I don't know how many kilometers. My grandma would get up in the night, light the stove, and throw a bunch of potatoes into it. Then she would wrap up the hot potatoes in this sack, prepared ahead of time from some fabric, and they would have that in their pockets, for warmth. The oldest [Andor Roth] studied law, and when the youngest [Laszlo Roth] was graduating, Uncle Andor already had a well-established clientele, so he paid for the youngest one's studies. He studied medicine. So two of them had a university education. And all of the boys graduated from high school. The girls, as was the custom then, were at home and helped out with the household up until they were married.

My father had forests, a forestry business. He owned them. My mother was at home. Before she got married she probably didn't work. Daughters were at home, helped with the household and waited for a husband. My father, when he was in the army, served in Roznava, where he and my mother met and it was love at first sight. However, in the meantime war broke out [WW I], and so they didn't get married until he returned, after the war. My father did seven years of service. Back then compulsory service lasted three years, and the day before he was to finish his service war broke out; he didn't even get to take off his uniform. He served everywhere where it was necessary, at the front. He didn't talk to me about it; I was eight when he died. So I don't remember his wartime reminiscences.

My parents were married in Roznava. It was probably a Jewish wedding; I wasn't around yet at the time. My mother already lived in Roznava, where my grandpa had bought that house. It was a multi-story house, quite large, so my father actually married into it.

Our mother spoke Slovak with us and our father Hungarian. Between each other they spoke Hungarian. Our mother didn't learn Hungarian until they moved to Roznava. Up until then she spoke only Slovak. My mother tongue is Slovak and Hungarian too, after my father. We spoke both. Our mother spoke only Slovak to us as a matter of principle, so that we wouldn't forget. And our father made a point of only speaking Hungarian with us. Our father, however, spoke Czech well, because during the war he had served with guys from Bohemia and Moravia, so he learned Czech there. There was a large number of Hungarians living in Roznava, because all of Southern Slovakia was mainly Hungarian; Hungarian-speaking people lived there. [Editor's note: according to the census of 15th February 1921, Roznava County had 39,913 inhabitants, of which 18,883 identified themselves as Hungarian, 18,054 as Czechoslovaks, 487 as Jews and 2,489 as others.]

My parents dressed in a 20th-century way. Dresses, blouses and skirts were worn. I know that my father wore breeches; they were in fashion back then. As far as religion goes: absolutely not. My father always searched high and low for his hat when he was off to the synagogue [meaning that he usually didn't cover his head, while Jewish faith requires covering the head].

Our house wasn't right in the center. The center of Roznava was a square, right. And then leading off it were various streets, so the street where our house was, was named Ruzova Street, No. 3. Our apartment was spacious, three rooms, and on the ground floor there was also one apartment. We of course lived above. The stairs led up to this hall. In the summer we ate there, because it was comfortable, cool. It had these tiles. There was a nice, large kitchen and three rooms. The bathroom was large; I used to go there to read forbidden books. I usually chose from the library books that weren't meant for me yet, various love stories. I would lock myself in there and read. That bathroom was the size of half of one of the rooms. It also had a window, so I also had light. I sat comfortably and read. Then I would smuggle the books out in my pants.

Our furniture was normal. In the kitchen there was a table, chairs, also some kind of trunk and cupboards, something like that. Then there was a bedroom, that's where my parents were. We had one really large room. It was almost a ballroom, I had a piano there. It was a large grand piano and it needed room. Otherwise there was a large dining table and chairs. There was a built-in glass case, with china and those various knick-knacks. There was a sofa, where Grandpa would always lay down after dinner, and call to me 'arany viragom, gyere nekem jatszani! (to the piano)' [Hungarian - my golden flower, come play for me!]. I would always lull him to sleep with my playing. My grandpa also slept in this room. There was a bed there, but placed in such a way as to not disturb the character of that living room. Well, and then my brother and I slept in that front room. The house didn't have a garden, only a small courtyard.

We had a maid, she lived with us. Those girls would usually get married and leave, they weren't with us for long. One of them was with us a long time; she was named Erzike [Elizabeth]. I liked her so much that I called her kis anya [Hungarian: little mother]. Later I got in touch with her, when I returned [from the concentration camp]. She was more or less like my second mother. She helped out with the household, and also cooked, because she was very capable and tidy, together with my mother. When there was a lot of laundry she also did it, but we also had a washerwoman. You know, my father was very socially aware; I know this from my mother. When we were born and had diapers, my father would say, 'Mother, you'll wash those diapers yourself. They're our children, and why should that maid wash our children's dirty diapers!' And we had to clean our own shoes. My father was a real democrat. I think that he also voted for the Social Democrats.

My father had nine siblings. The oldest was Andor, then there was my father, Jeno, then Sandor, Mihaly, Erno, Gyula and Ladislav - Laszlo. Seven boys and three girls: Paula, Gizella and Marketa. Andor graduated from law school in Budapest and had a well-established practice there. His wife was a piano professor in Budapest at the conservatory. They had one daughter, Agnes she was named. He [Andor] didn't survive [died during the Holocaust]. Only Sany bacsi [Uncle Sani] and Laszlo, they survived.

Sandor lived in Budapest and was well-off; he had a fancy goods shop. His wife was named Magdolna and was a farmer's daughter. They had one son, Andor. He died last year in Budapest. He was very well-known, here too [in the Czech Republic], because he was an expert, a builder of railway bridges. He had an award from us too [Czech Republic], from the Ministry. They would invite him to various countries for consultations. I cried a lot when his wife wrote that he had died.

Mihaly stayed in the family home in Zadorfalva. He later took over the farm. His wife was named Bozenka. They were all from Hungary, only my mother was from Slovakia. They had one daughter, Zsuzsanna, she lives in Israel.

Erno lived in Putnok, which was this smaller town in Hungary. He had fields but also a general store. His wife was called Rozsika. She was very kind. He actually married into that store, but he owned some properties. They had one son, Jozsef.

Gyula worked for Sandor in Budapest. He was married, but married a divorced woman that had one daughter. So he didn't have children of his own. His wife's name...we called her Aunt Panni. That was short for some name.

Laszlo was a doctor in Budapest. After the war, in 1956 4, when there was the so-called counter-revolution, he left for the United States; at that time he was already married. There he at first worked in some institute for the mentally ill as a male nurse, until he got his degree recognized. And then he worked as a doctor. He's got one daughter, Eva. His wife is, I think, named Zsuzsanna.

Paula was named Fischer after her wedding. Her husband was Lenard Fischer. They had a son and daughter: the daughter, Klara, was in an advanced stage of pregnancy when they deported her. The poor thing went straight into the gas chambers. She was a beauty, a real beauty. Their son was Tibor. He now lives partly in Hungary and partly in Israel. Uncle Lenard had a company, I don't know, maybe he was in the lumber business. I didn't really ever pay any attention to it. I do know that after the war [WWI] he worked for some government ministry in Budapest, and then years later he returned to his native village, because his parents had died and he took over their store, and it wasn't until a few years later that he moved to Miskolc.

Marketa's husband was named Viliam, but I don't know his surname. Those names are disappearing from my memory. They lived in Sajokazali [a municipality in Hungary]; it was a larger village, more of a municipality. They also had a butcher's shop. They had a daughter, Magda, who looked so much like me that people confused the two of us. Aunt Marketa was together with her daughter in Auschwitz and during the death march 5, Maketa could no longer continue. She was horribly exhausted and fell down. Magda kept crying, 'Mommy, please, hold on, mommy, mommy, please, hold on!' She kept on picking her up and picking her up. But she couldn't and the SS soldier said to her, 'so you won't be lonely,' and shot her as well.

We kept very close relations with them [with her father's siblings and their families]. Really very close. They regularly came over to visit us and we them. I liked them very much, because they reminded me of my father. And for them we were still orphans, the children of their beloved brother. So their relationship with us was very lovely. I really loved all of them. I couldn't say which one of them I loved more.

My mother had one brother and one sister. Her brother lived in Bratislava. He was named Gejza Kraus. His wife was named Friderika Hirschbeinova and they had a clothing store in Bratislava. They had one daughter, Alica. I think that in 1942 they deported them to Lublin. [Editor's note: from 27th March to 14th June 1942, 39,899 citizens of Jewish origin were deported from the territory of the Slovak State (1939 - 1945) to the Lublin district.] We searched for them, but never found anything. They were probably all shot.

My aunt was named Berta, married Deutschova. They lived in Presov and there they were shareholders in Slovenka. [Editor's note: this factory was founded in the year 1920 by Jan Orszaghy in Martin as the first Slovak knitting factory and joint stock company, which was later named SLOVENKA. After the war, it became indebted, and the factory was purchased by the Prague Legiobanka (which administered it up until nationalization). The state-owned company SLOVENKA, headquartered in Martin, was created on the basis of a decree by the President of the Republic in May of 1948 (the second wave of nationalization), and that retroactively to 1st January 1946. The factory partly also concerned itself with mercantile activities.] That was some sort of co-operative store that sold women's and men's underwear. They weren't doing too well, then they returned to Roznava, and there they lived up until the war. They had one daughter, Jolanka and a son, Vojtech, who committed suicide because of some girl. He poisoned himself with cyanide. He was 24.

Aunt Berta lived in Roznava. We were together every day; they lived only a little ways away from us. After dinner my aunt would come over and she and my mother would sit by the window and embroider or crochet. Towards the evening she would then go home. Like one big family, really. Well, and Uncle Gejza would often come from Bratislava to visit us. He liked his two sisters a lot. It was he that took care of me when I began to attend the conservatory. You know, when I see today those relationships between siblings or in families, where maybe they don't speak with each other, or are suing each other over property, I can't comprehend it. On both sides I saw only solidarity and love. So for me it's really quite foreign and incomprehensible.

Roznava was a small town of seven thousand. [Editor's note: according to the 1921 census, there were 39,913 people living in the district of Roznava, while the town of Roznava itself had 7,325 inhabitants.] There was a mining colony, but about two kilometers from Roznava. Well, you know, back then for me it was the center of the world. Like for a child, but I can tell you, that when I was in the concentration camp, that homesickness, for my home town, when I saw around me, in my mind's eye, those mountains, forests, the longing and pain were worse even than that horrible hunger, thirst, beatings and that hard work, that unbelievably hard work that we women did. So I really was this local patriot.

I can't tell you exactly how many Jews lived in Roznava, but they took about 350 to 400 of us from the ghetto. [Editor's note: on 1st December 1930, 634 inhabitants of the Roznava district identified themselves as having Jewish nationality. In the actual town of Roznava there lived at that time 425 Jews.] There was a synagogue [built in Moorish style, in the year 1893] in town, in fact a very nice

one. Not big, but nice. Around it there was a garden, I can still see before me a huge walnut tree and below it benches. We didn't go there very often, only on the high holidays. At first there was this one old rabbi there, who died, so I don't remember him. Then came his nephew Dr. Leo Singer [died in the year 1944]. He had a doctorate in philosophy and then also did a degree in theology. He was a young person, not very good-looking, but inside he was so beautiful! He had such amazing knowledge! Each month he prepared a cultural program. Because I was quite good at reciting, I would usually recite some poem. We also had a piano there, so I also played. There was this one very talented little boy there, who played the violin, so sometimes the two of us played some piece together. Then the rabbi would start speaking. I once heard him, he lectured on Einstein's 'Theory of Relativity.' He was truly such an advanced person!

Growing up

Those lectures used to be in the evening, it was only for adults. For children we also had theater, puppets. But that was already right after 1939, and right at that time I began to realize that I belonged to the Jewish community. Because expressions of anti-Semitism were already very strong, we could already feel it. The Jewish youth withdrew into its shell and so it brought us together, that we only met amongst ourselves. Well, and it was for these children that we made those puppets and performed plays for them. We tried to somehow culturally occupy ourselves, because we didn't go to the movies any more. The Germans made these films [German anti- Jewish propaganda] like 'Jud Suss' based on the book by Feuchtwanger 6, so you can imagine it. And under the influence of this film, when people came out of the movie theater and met a Jewish man, they would beat him to a pulp. We wanted to avoid such unpleasantness. We met quite regularly, here and there, and we always managed to amuse ourselves. There were quite a few of us young people. At that time our social circle was limited to a narrow, or narrower, circle of people that were of a similar nature.

During my youth the Jewish community was almost Neolog 7. Jewish stores were open even on Saturday. People made a living mainly in business, but I also knew one miner, the mine locksmith. A shoemaker lived close to us. A terribly poor family! You know, I've always only heard that Jews are rich. I'd like for them to see that family! They lived in a one-room apartment, and their kitchen was so tiny! It had a window up high, so when you walked along outside the building, you were looking down into that kitchen. They couldn't even afford to pay for electricity, so at night they worked by the light of a candle, or a petroleum lamp. I know that my mother would always wrap up my clothes that I didn't wear any more, but that were still in good shape, and took them to them. They had two daughters, one was the same age as me, plus two boys. The other Jewish families would send them flour and butter on Thursday or Friday, so that they would at least have something for Sabbath. Once I was over there for supper, and they had unbuttered bread, only one slice apiece, and radishes, those red radishes. Each one got a few slices, and that was supper. They were truly poor, and there were more families like that. Not everyone was rich. There were people that lived only very modestly and did manual labor.

They built a mikveh in Roznava, but only the shammash, shochet and cantor went there. The rabbi, if he went, that I don't even know. We all had a bathroom at home, so people bathed at home. Otherwise I know that a couple of those devout people from the older generation probably went there. My parents didn't go there at all. I've never been there in my life; I don't even know what it looks like. On Thursdays after lunch we had religious classes, and the rabbi taught us that, because

there was no Jewish school in Roznava. It wasn't necessary for those few Jews.

Before the war there were shnorrers [beggar, the Yiddish term shnoder means 'to contribute'], yeah, I remember them, but really don't know how often they would come by, because I wasn't interested. I had a different world. If I wasn't in school, I was in the street and we would play outside. I was terribly fond of fighting with boys. I had completely different concerns than watching if shnorrers were coming by. Well, but at our place at dinnertime there was always this one bocher [student], but I don't know what that means. I know that they called him Bocher. This terribly poor boy, who perhaps didn't have parents. He would come over once a week and teach us how to pray. We weren't too enthusiastic about that praying, but the rabbi did after all want us to know how to read [Hebrew], well, so he would come over, but really more because my mother would give him supper. I remember that one time my father was walking along, and that poor guy didn't even have a winter coat. He walked around in winter in only that old suit. Father said, 'I can't stand to look at that any more!' There were a couple of well-off Jewish families in town, and he said, 'Look, he's a young person, he'll get tuberculosis!' Where we lived the winters were very cold, though short, but cold. He managed to get some money together. My father grabbed him, 'Come on, now we're going shopping!' He bought him a complete set of winter clothes, boots and a new suit and a coat. Everything, and a warm scarf too. The poor guy cried.

He came by only once a week, but the custom was that they came to, as they used to say 'napokat enni' [in Hungarian literally 'eat the day']. In Roznava there was a high school, and his parents were poor and couldn't afford for the boy to go somewhere for dinner and couldn't last all day on just a piece of bread. So before the start of the school year, either the mother or father would search out six families, because there were six school days in the week. So from what I remember, we always had one diner. He would come on a certain day, say on a Monday, and to the other families on other days, up until the end of the week. They were only Jewish boys. In this respect there was this solidarity. Jewish families held together, they really tried to help those that needed it.

I don't know if there was electricity and running water everywhere in town. We had it, but, you know, there were families that couldn't afford it. For light they had a petroleum lamp and they bathed in a washtub. The so-called main streets and roads were paved with cobblestones. Back then there were few cars driving around town. I have no clue how many people in town owned cars. Maybe only a few people had one; it was a big luxury.

Every week, on Friday and Saturday, there were markets. Farmwomen from the countryside would come and sell poultry, eggs, butter and fruit. Everything. There was also a fair held, but only once every three months. Everything you could imagine was sold there: sweets, clothing, absolutely everything. My mother went shopping every Friday, but for the most part we would have everything delivered. We bought in quantity. Every year we made jam, lekvar - szilva lekvar [Hungarian: plum jam]. So we had our connections in the countryside and they would deliver us a hundredweight [100 kilograms] of plums. We'd pit them until midnight and then cook them out in the courtyard. Nuts were also purchased by the bagful. My mother would go to the market to buy peppers, green peppers. There were several Bulgarians, gardeners around. [Editor's note: Bulgarian gardeners assumed a prominent position in the cultivation of vegetables across the whole of Europe. Their migration began on the cusp of the 18th and 19th centuries. They began arriving in Slovakia at the end of the 19th century. In the following century local officials recorded vegetable farms founded by Bulgarians in about 64 localities. In the period between the two world

wars (1935) the number of Bulgarian vegetable farms in Slovakia was estimated at 320. They were the most numerous around Kosice and Bratislava.] During the time of the First Republic, you could get ten peppers for a crown, ten halers apiece. A kilo of butter, the stuff that was brought by the women, cost nine crowns. There was also a dairy, but there it was a bit more expensive. There was no fish market. But I know that my grandpa liked fish, so my mother would sometimes make them. But where she bought the fish, I don't know. Neither was I interested, it was on the table, so it was.

I remember that once Minister Derer 8 from Bratislava was in Roznava, he was a Social Democrat. It was a big deal; they paraded him down the main street, around the square with a bouquet of red carnations. That's what I remember from it, at the time I was still a child. We only hung around and looked at him, you know. And when the Republic fell apart in 1939 [see Slovak State] 9, I was only fifteen. My father was such a Hungarian patriot that when they played the Hungarian anthem, my father would stand at attention and tears would stream down his face. I never became attached to that Hungarian nation, because I was born in democratic Czechoslovakia and the class differences there [in Hungary] were so big. When some poor guy went to see some official, he would wring his cap in his hands until mister all-powerful bureaucrat notified him that he could step forth and stand before his desk. So this bothered me. Or once I was in Budapest and a carriage drove by me, in which Horthy's 10 wife was sitting. The carriage stopped, someone got out and before Horthy's wife got out he knelt and kissed her hand. Well, I was completely flabbergasted that something like that existed! In Czechoslovakia, when you wanted to write the president, it was Dear Mr. President and nothing more. Something like that was incomprehensible to me.

I was born in the year 1924 in Roznava. From the age of three I attended nursery school, a convent school. I spent most of my time outside in front of our house, where there were a lot of children. There weren't many cars in those days: once a day a car would drive by, and slowly at that. We children were always fooling around outside. And as soon as the first snowfall came, we'd be sledding and going skating; while my father was still alive [died in 1932]. My childhood was truly beautiful. I took his loss very hard, even though I was still a child. That's how I remember him, he loved me so much, and I loved him so much. My brother was four years older than me, and when I was born, my father was disappointed. He wanted another son. So in the beginning his relationship to me was quite lukewarm. And then I know that when my father was sitting, my place was in his lap. And when my aunts came to visit from Hungary and said to him, 'Listen, aren't you overdoing it a bit with your love for that child?' my father said, 'Half of my heart is this child!'

Father died when I was eight and my brother was twelve. My mother remarried after two or three years. It's not something I like to recall. It was a very unhappy marriage, and if I've ever hated anyone from the bottom of my heart, it was my stepfather. Both my brother and I hated him! He didn't like us. He wanted a child of his own and our mother didn't. She was afraid that it would affect his behavior toward us, although his behavior was... My stepfather was named Alexander Eichnel, well and my mother then took his name. We never thought of him as our father. We really kept him at a distance. I couldn't bring myself to call him Dad, or something like that. I avoided addressing him in any sort of more intimate way. He was a tinsmith by trade.

At first we lived on the small amount of capital we had gotten for those forests. [Editor's note: they sold the forests in the Roznava region that had belonged to their father, Jeno Roth.] You know, it was no great fortune, but our father's brother [Sandor Roth] helped us out. The relationships among the siblings were beautiful, really. They lived and breathed for each other. And that uncle

was very well-off. He had a wholesale notions and leather goods business in Budapest. I recall that in the spring we would get a package from him with cloth for an outfit, a coat and money for shoes. He dressed us. He would say: 'I don't want anyone to say that he's working to support my brother's children.'

Back then there were five grades of public school and three of council school. I attended public school at the convent. Right after I finished council school, I left for Bratislava and they accepted me into second year at the conservatory. Evidently I must have had some sort of talent if I came from such a small town and they immediately accepted me. My teacher was a conservatory graduate. She was named Boriska Falvy and married some lawyer, Gotthilf, I think. They couldn't get me away from the piano; they had to drag me away from it, that's how much I liked it. I loved Beethoven immensely. I also liked Mozart. Interestingly enough, as a young girl I didn't have a feel for Chopin. He's very emotional, and it was only as a young woman that I began to understand his music and very much fell in love with him.

I began to attend the conservatory in Bratislava and then I had to return back home. Because at the end of 1938 Roznava was annexed by Hungary [see First Vienna Decision] 11. So my musical career thus ended. They said that I'll once be a shining star in the musical sky. Golden eyes that saw me there. But I took private lessons in Miskolc with Professor Hollosy. Lessons, well, once a month, but he said, 'yes, you're going on to the next grade.' I already wanted to attend music academy, which was seven years.

After the war I wanted to finish conservatory, so that's why I went to Prague. After finishing the third year of conservatory, I could have taken a state degree exam, which would have qualified me to teach. But I knew the entire conservatory [program], even though I didn't have the papers for it. I actually wanted to finish that entire seven-year academy, so that I would be qualified, for I didn't have a trade, a diploma, nothing. But then I met my husband, it was 16th August and the next day he asked me for my hand. We were married on the 31st, in 1945. Then several years went by before I again sat down at a piano.

I didn't come by a lot of religion at home, because though my parents observed holidays, it was more out of respect for their parents and traditions than from some sort of religious conviction. Irrespective of the fact that I attended a Catholic convent school and didn't have even one Jewish girlfriend. My friends were from among my classmates. Once this one girl came to visit me [the student that did this interview] and kept asking me how I perceive my Jewish identity. Well, that's really tough, because I lived in an exclusively Christian environment, just that school alone, that I attended from the age of three, even nursery school. My parents had many Christian friends; there may have been more of them than those from Jewish families. We were very assimilated. I perceived Judaism solely as a religion. When my classmates had catechism, I had time off. And then when I had religious lessons, they had time off. This is the only thing in which I saw a difference, nowhere else. For me Jewishness wasn't a nationality or a race. I didn't come into contact with this until those sad times began, but otherwise I didn't see any differences. One was a Protestant, [another] a Catholic, and I was of Israelite denomination. So that's all what Jewishness meant to me. The situation changed after 1939, when the Republic fell apart and we were annexed by Hungary. There they already had those restrictive anti-Jewish laws [in Hungary] 12.

My parents attended synagogue only during holidays. While my grandpa was still alive [Jakub Kraus, died in 1937], they were a little more devout, of course. For Passover the dishes were changed and so on. And then, when Grandpa was already dead, it wasn't taken so seriously any more. We also cleaned house before Passover, but it was only normal spring cleaning. I definitely ate leavened bread. We bought matzah, after all, traditions are traditions. We also had a Christmas tree. Yes, Chanukkah, we observed that too. Then came Christmas and we had a tree and presents. Our parents were quite lukewarm but they were believers.

While Grandpa was still alive we kept kosher, but afterwards we didn't. At our place we ate mainly poultry and we kept geese for the goose-fat. Geese and poultry and once in a while some beef. No pork, but when I went on some trip my mother would make me schnitzels from pork meat. Otherwise, at home, I guess they didn't care for it too much, there was more poultry. Our mother fasted at Yom Kippur, but we didn't have to.

I had one brother, who was four years older than me. His name was Ladislav Roth. We had a beautiful relationship. When I was smaller, of course he was the big one and I was the little one. When I was already 15, 16, we really liked each other a lot. Once the high school principal said to my brother, 'Listen, you're walking around with your sister as if you were lovers!' Because he'd always put his arm around my shoulders or take me by the arm, so we really did look like that...! My brother would say, 'Sir, that's my sister, whom I really like a lot! I've got only her!' At that time our mother was already remarried and our relationship with our stepfather was very bad, so we were very attached to each other. And when someone that didn't know any better saw us, he really did think that we were lovers and not siblings. My brother didn't attend the monastery school because there was also a state school in Roznava. He went there, five grades and then went to high school and graduated in Roznava.

My brother had a bar mitzvah, by then our father was no longer alive. I know that it was very touching. On Saturday afternoon the adults were invited, our rabbi, that was still that old rabbi. We had fish, barkhes and I don't know what else. Various sweets were made, so that meat and dairy wasn't mixed, so that it was done properly. Well, and then on Sunday afternoon the young people would come by, my brother's friends and my girlfriends.

Before the war I had a fiance; he was my brother's classmate from high school. And in such a small town we all knew each other. We had the same last name, even though we weren't related. He was named Tibor Roth. I had a very happy marriage and I really did like my husband, it was mutual, but the kind of love that I felt for Tibor, that's something that you experience only once in a lifetime. He was the only son of well-off parents. His father was the director of this one smaller distillery in Roznava. He was also a shareholder. They only had the one son. Tibor was a leftist, though he wasn't a member of the Communist Youth, but he had distinct leftist tendencies.

During the war

During the war Tibor was in the Budapest ghetto 13. Somehow, I don't know how, it's something that his aunt who lived in Budapest wrote me afterwards, he got into the Arrow Cross Party 14, that was a Hungarian fascist party - 'nyilas keresztesek.' He had very good knowledge of when and where raids were to take place and when and who they'd be arresting, and he would then anonymously notify, warn those people beforehand. But it began to be suspicious that when they would go get someone, they'd never find them at home. They began to follow him, and then he

knew that things were bad. That was in February of 1945. He didn't want to go to his relatives', because that was the first place they'd look for him, and he didn't want his relatives to have problems. He hid under this one bridge in Budapest. You can easily imagine that there, in the winter, in February, he got a bad case of pneumonia. Around 10th February the Russians had already liberated Budapest. [Editor's note: the 2nd and 3rd Ukrainian front completed the liberation of Budapest on 13th February 1945.] With the last remnants of his strength he managed to climb up onto the river embankment, and there he collapsed. People loaded him onto some cart and took him to the hospital. He lived a couple more days, but they weren't able to save him. I then wrote him from home; I had his relatives' address, because I used to send him letters there. And that aunt of his wrote me what had happened, well, it was a harsh blow for me.

In March the Germans occupied all of Hungary [see 19th March 1944] 15. In April or at the beginning of May we went to the ghetto. The ghetto was in Roznava. They emptied three or four buildings next to each other, and that's where we were. I went to work in a brick factory, it was terribly hard work. I went there to get away from that place [the ghetto]. I felt like I was being strangled there. I wanted to get out amongst people, see the streets and see people. And then on the sixth, at the beginning of June, they drove us from the ghetto to Diosgyor, near Miskolc, where we spent two days in a brick factory. And then to Auschwitz. The trip took a week, and then we arrived. In Auschwitz each minute had sixty seconds of horror. At that time my brother was already in a work camp. Unfortunately he didn't survive the war.

We arrived in Auschwitz on 13th June. I went to the left and my mother to the right. Back then I didn't know what that meant. We were without water, there were about ninety of us in one wagon and they gave us one pail of water. We had food with us, but didn't eat at all. Our mouths were so dry that we couldn't swallow. So everything that we had with us stayed there. I was as if stunned, I had no idea where I was, what was going on, I only heard them bellowing. I was completely out of it. I heard them bellowing, 'Alle raus! Alle raus! [German: Everyone out!] And leave everything on the train, just step off in pairs.' I took my mother by the arm and we went. I was just automatically lifting my feet, because the trip had taken a week. During the day we stood still and it was hot. Horrible, no water and ninety people in one wagon. A barred window. I had no idea at all where I was and what was happening to me.

My mother's hand trembled and she said, 'Oh my God, they're splitting people up over there!' She noticed that there was a doctor standing there, a doctor that is, that had also taken the Hippocratic oath, and on one side and the other, SS men and SS women... My mother noticed - I didn't even see them - that standing on the right side were young women and that older people were going off to the left. My mother wasn't old, she was 48, but her hair was completely white. She let go of me and inconspicuously nudged me. She said, 'Go there, with the young people!' I just managed to kiss her hand and said to her, 'Mommy dear, be strong!' This was all as if in a dream, I stood there and realized that I'm not holding my mother by the hand. So I stood there helplessly for a while, and wanted to take a step to the left. One SS soldier jumped over to me, I was wearing a coat and skirt, and he took me by one corner of that coat and threw me over there. By doing this he actually saved my life. I then went to the camp.

I didn't know what was actually going on. We then asked the block leader, where are the young women, where are the children, those gorgeous, beautiful children. Such pretty ones, in Roznava we had several beautiful young women! The block leaders told us, in such an evasive manner,

these were girls that had been there from 1942, they're in Camp H, they've got easier work there; children there get milk and better food than here. Don't worry about it! I was crying constantly, and my girlfriends were becoming annoyed with me, saying, 'Hey, we're in the same situation as you! Stop crying, you'll cry your eyes out!' I said, 'I'm not crying because I'm thirsty, hungry or because I'm sleeping on the bare ground, and that instead of a pillow I've got my clodhoppers that I wore on the trip here, but because I've got this horrible feeling that something's happened to my mother!'

About two months later I saw a former childhood friend of mine. Edita Langova. They came from Spisska Nova Ves and had Slovak citizenship, so when the Hungarians came, they deported them, but Slovakia didn't want them. For I don't know how many weeks they lived in, as it was called, 'senki foldje' [in Hungarian: no man's land], between Slovakia and Hungary. People they knew were bringing them food so that they would somehow survive. Then the Slovak government took mercy on them and accepted them. Well, and in 1942 they went to Auschwitz. So I saw Edita there, at that time she was already a block leader, but in a different part of the camp. I came to see her, but she didn't recognize me with my hair cut and in those horrible rags. My first question was: 'Edita, please tell me, what that Camp H is?" 'H, Camp Himmel [heavenly camp], [after saying these words Mrs. Brodska lifted her hands to the heavens - B.P.]. And that's where our mothers and children are.' She said, 'You didn't know about it, what did you think?!' So that's how I found out about it. That's why the endless weeping and that eternal pain! I felt that my mother must have died such a horrible death!

Towards the end of October [1944] they deported us further onwards. In the camp we were always running and hiding, whenever we knew that there was going to be a selection. We hid where we could. For example we managed to hide in a different block. The older prisoners, well, the girls that had been there from 1942, said that there was only one road out of Auschwitz: up a chimney. There's no other way out! That's how they said it. I don't know what we were hoping for, but at the end of October they began to deport the entire section of the camp where we were. We were the last block and there was no longer anyplace to run, no place to hide. We marched off and stopped in Brezinka in front of the gas chamber. It didn't look like one, there were heavy iron gates and above it grass, but we knew what it was. That was the longest night of my life. How long we stood there, I don't know. I was 20, 20 1/2, and I was asking myself what I had done to have to die such a horrible death at the age of twenty, while I so terribly want to live! We hugged and kissed each other. We promised each other that while we're still able to breathe we'll hold each other by the hand, so that we won't be so alone as we're dying. I don't know how many hours we could have been standing there, when an SS soldier drove up along the track and bellowed, 'Alle zuruck!' [Everyone back!] So we turned around and went. Auschwitz was immense; I don't know where they were leading us. They ordered us to strip, selection. At that time I already had glasses, not strong ones, weak, about one and a half diopters. One of the girls that had already been there a longer time saw me and said to me, 'hide those glasses.' I was holding some bread in my hand, which we had gotten for supper, a quarter of a loaf. I hollowed out a hole in it and stuck those glasses into it and carried that bread. I passed the selection.

During the night we were in a room, I don't know what room it was, but there were mice running around everywhere. I sat down, and suddenly I felt that something was watching me. It was a rat. I screamed and jumped up! I leaned up against a wall and that's how I slept. There were more of us, so we leaned up against each other, held each other, so that none of us would fall down. In the

morning they chased us out and we stood outside all day until nightfall. Well, it was already October, not the warmest, you know. So they dressed us! I got an organza nightshirt that reached all the way to my ankles. Women's knickers, that were down to here on me [to the knees], but I didn't care, at least it protected my knees. I got some child's dress, which was coming apart at the seams, and some boy's coat. They took my shoes, because I still had my own, from home. They were these solid shoes. Well, in their place I got these black high-heeled ballroom shoes. By then I had been standing outside for three or four days. So I took off my shoes outside. We also got socks, one gray and one purple. The way we were dressed wasn't fit for even a circus. In the morning of the fourth day they woke us up, and we set off by foot, on a march.

The older prisoners were saying that there were various transports, several hours, two-day ones. The several-hour ones consisted of them loading people up and circling Auschwitz round and round, but the end station was a gas chamber. We started marching and in the distance we saw lights and then they distributed packages. There really was an SS woman standing there with two or three helpers, girls, and each one of us got a package. We got a half a loaf of bread, a slice of salami and a piece of margarine. It was only when we got on the train, and it was a passenger train, and I saw the first civilian building outside, and there was light inside and you could see into the room and in the window there was a birdcage, it was only then that we believed that we had left Auschwitz behind us. That we had gotten out of that hell after all.

They liberated us during the death march. There were ninety of us girls. After the war I returned home and sadly didn't find anyone from my family. I wasn't at home long, about six weeks. I wanted to finish conservatory. I left for Prague and on the first day there met my husband. Fourteen days later I was married. And that's how my entire musical career came to an end.

Post-war

My husband was named Ondrej Brodsky. He was also a Jew, but it meant absolutely nothing to him. He was born on 17th October 1911. There was an age difference of twelve and a half, thirteen years between us. That's how I wanted it. I didn't want some young guy who hadn't sowed his wild oats yet, whose main interest was parties. I couldn't pull myself together psychically from everything that had happened. I needed a man that would support me in all respects, who would be my mother, father, brother, husband, everything. I could only find this in a more mature man. My husband was 33 and was a soldier in the foreign legion.

Before the war my husband had been a technical manager in a co-op in Zilina where they manufactured spirits, cognac and whatnot. He was there until it all started happening. My husband emigrated in 1939 after the Republic fell apart. He emigrated to Poland. My husband was a Social Democrat, so he was listed as a political emigrant. And then, when war broke out, they went further on. There was a large group of boys from Czechoslovakia. And they joined the army when the first brigade was being formed, which was a solely Czechoslovak brigade. So he spent the whole war as a soldier, right to the end.

After the war they offered him a factory and I don't know what else, as a member of the foreign legion, he had been decorated several times. He also got a war cross; that was the highest decoration at the time. [Editor's note: the Czechoslovak War Cross of 1939 was established to commemorate the battle to liberate the Czechoslovak Republic from enemy occupation as a visible decoration for Czechoslovak citizens at home, units and members of the Czechoslovak Army

abroad, and also units and members of allied armies that participated in the fighting which broke out in the year 1939, and who exhibited an extraordinary and successful act or command thereof, in the course of which they risked or lost their lives.] My husband said that he didn't care to be some factory owner, but that he wanted to work. At first he worked in army administration, he was this housing officer, a bureaucrat. At that time my husband was already retired, but because the state of his health was bad, he was reevaluated. After his return he was in the army for about a year and a half. He was listed as having a military disability pension.

Sadly, it's been thirty years since my husband died. It was in 1976. He had a civilian funeral, at a crematorium. He had an army funeral in Carlsbad. I used to go visit his urn twice, three times a week. And when my health became bad and I couldn't go there - back then there was no bus service there - I had to walk up a hill, we brought his urn home. We have a cottage in a very beautiful place, and my husband loved it there. Our children laid his urn to rest there, with great reverence. There's always a bouquet and a candle.

While my husband was in the army, we lived in Prague. When he left the service we moved to Carlsbad, so since 1946 we've lived in Carlsbad. At first we lived someplace else, it was actually an army apartment, and when my husband left the service we moved. It was a second-category apartment with local heating, it had three rooms. When I became a widow I moved here, where I now live. Grandma Blauova [the mother of Mrs. Brodska's former son- in-law] was widowed a half year before me. Eva [Mrs. Brodska's daughter] lived in this apartment with her family. And they moved into my apartment, the three-room one. Well, Grandma and I moved here. That's when our children were still married.

I worked as an accountant, accounting is the lousiest work that there is. I knocked on wood when I went into retirement. I had two employers, The Surface Construction Company and The Agricultural Construction Company. It was this construction company. That's where I worked the entire time I was employed. I didn't have to take a re-qualification course, though they wanted it of me, they wanted me to improve my qualifications, because conservatory has nothing in common with accounting. I said that I'd go work as a construction warehouse clerk, but that there's no way anyone would get me to go to school. 'I've got a sick husband and two children in school, why, in a year you'd put me in the grave. What are you thinking?' The company accountant then said to me: 'We'll tolerate it, it's all right, but so that it's somehow taken into account, we'll lower your salary by ten crowns!' It was this symbolic salary reduction. They then made it up to me in other ways, those ten crowns.

I didn't have a lot of free time, because I worked in the accounting department and every week I had a deadline, and then I would take the last bus home. I didn't have a lot of time. We'd spend Saturdays and Sundays at the cottage with the girls.

We had two daughters. The older one is named Eva. She was born on 5th December 1949. The younger one is named Silvia and was born on 30th December 1951. Both are born in December, exactly two years apart. When the girls were small, Eva would take horrible advantage of Silvia, because Silvia is good-natured, she'll do the first and last for anyone. Eva really took advantage of her good nature in a vile way. Then when they grew up and Eva was wiser, she realized that her sister is also there for some other purpose than to shine her shoes.

Eva trained to be a goldsmith, but hasn't done that for a long time. She took a course and has a beauty salon for dogs. She trims and grooms doggies. Silvia graduated from teachers' high school and works as a governess. First she taught at a special school. Then, at her own request, she transferred to the teachers' school residence. They've got a beautiful residence.

Both of my daughters live in Carlsbad. Eva got married early, she was 20. She married the son of Grandma Blauova, my roommate. But their marriage didn't last and they divorced. Then about eighteen years ago Eva remarried. Her second husband is named Karel, he comes from Prague. Silvia also married early. She met her husband at her high school prom. When they were preparing for the prom, for the celebratory polonaise, and because the teachers' school is strictly a girls' school, they had perhaps only one boy there. Part of the army was here in Carlsbad, so the commander lent them forty soldiers for the prom. And that's how Silvia met Honza. He didn't even ever return home. He's from Ostrava. Honza took our [last] name, because he was named Zmija [viper, adder]. Well, that poor guy had so many problems at school, and he said that he didn't want his children to go through what he had to in school. So he's got our name, Brodsky.

Eva has two sons, and Silva has two sons. Eva's oldest son is Tomas, who's 35. The second son is named Peter, and is 33. Tomas is an elevator mechanic by trade, but he then took some course, so he also performs various inspections. But he works manually too. Peter studied to be a chef, but he's got a furniture store. Both are already married. Tomas has two children and Peter gained one son by marriage and little Adamek is theirs, he's a year and a half. Silva also has two boys. The older one is Jan, he's 31, and the younger one is Ondra, he's 24, almost 25. Jan is also an elevator mechanic, but also took some sort of course, like Tomas. And Ondra is an auto-mechanic.

I have a very positive relationship with Israel. The other day I was listening, it was very nice, to that guy Bretislav Olser [born 1947], publicist, photographer, journalist, and traveler. Photojournalist, Moravian, always at 8 o'clock on Praha 2 there's the program 'House Guest.' It's about three quarters of an hour long. I knew that they'd be talking about Israel, so I listened to it. Since 1996 he's been abroad about six or seven times. He's already published a few books on this subject [e.g. They Survived Six Wars, ...And God Became an Orphan, Blood Under Both]. By the way, he's not Jewish, so he can't be accused of being biased. He said that Jews were accused of doing only business. But what else were they supposed to do? They weren't allowed to work in agriculture, they didn't receive land. So they could only do business and study in the ghetto. So then it went from one generation to the next, on and on, until the son of Empress Maria-Theresa, Joseph II 16, issued the tolerance edict. So the fact that Jews only did business wasn't only their fault, but those very strict laws and circumstances forced them into it. He always stays there for a longer time. It really made me happy, I'm telling you, I'm not a chauvinist, when an unbiased person said that you can't understand those Arabs. A total of six million people live in Israel, and of that one million are Arabs [Editor's note: statistics from the year 2005 state that Israel has 6.9 million inhabitants. The largest group is made up of Jews: 5,260.000 and Arabs: 1,350.000]. Their standard of living can't be compared to the standard of living of the Arabs that live in the surrounding countries. They have all the advantages, they can study, and also have the advantage that they don't have to join the army and aren't in danger of being shot. He said that Israel belongs to those countries that are at the top as far as culture and standard of living goes. I was very glad to hear that from an unbiased person.

Israel existed before, too. Israel didn't cease to exist when in the year 70 [the year 70 A.D., the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem by the Romans] they subjugated Israel and destroyed Jerusalem and the temple. Back then they dragged many Jews off into slavery. Many Jews then moved away to various countries, but many Jews also stayed there, and those continued to uphold their national culture and religion. Israel as such never ceased to exist; it was only modern Israel that was created in 1948.

In Roznava the Jewish population was very assimilated. To this day I don't really know what I am. I live in this vacuum. And if it was possible to write 'nationality human,' or 'person,' in questionnaires, I would most certainly write 'nationality human.' I feel myself to be a person. I'm not saying that I'm a cosmopolitan, but I love this country, because I live here. I love my native city, my native land and I don't know if I could get used to being someplace else, but in no way am I nationalistically or chauvinistically inclined, in no way whatsoever. Neither with respect to Judaism, nor with respect to the other side.

Glossary

1 First Czechoslovak Republic (1918-1938)
The First Czechoslovak Republic was created after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy following World War I. The union of the Czech lands and Slovakia was officially proclaimed in Prague in 1918, and formally recognized by the Treaty of St. Germain in 1919. Ruthenia was added by the Treaty of Trianon in 1920. Czechoslovakia inherited the greater part of the industries of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the new government carried out an extensive land reform, as a result of which the living conditions of the peasantry increasingly improved. However, the constitution of 1920 set up a highly centralized state and failed to take into account the issue of national minorities, and thus internal political life was dominated by the struggle of national minorities (especially the Hungarians and the Germans) against Czech rule. In foreign policy Czechoslovakia kept close contacts with France and initiated the foundation of the Little Entente in 1921.

2 Nemcova, Bozena (1820-1862)
born Barbora Panklova in Vienna into the family of Johann Pankl, a nobleman's coachman. She was significantly influenced by her upbringing at the hands of her grandmother Magdalena Novotna during the years 1825-29. In 1837 she was married to financial official Josef Nemec. She contributed to a number of magazines. She was inspired by traditional folk stories to write seven collections of folk tales and legends and ten collections of Slovak fairy-tales and legends, which are generally a gripping fictional adaptation of fairy-tale themes. Through her works Nemcova has to her credit the bringing together of the Czech and Slovak nations and their cultures. She is the author of travelogues and ethnographic sketches, realistic stories of the countryside (Crazy Bara, Mountain Village, Karla, The Teacher, At The Chateau and The Village Below) and the supreme novel Granny. Thanks to her rich folkloristic work and particularly her work Granny, Bozena Nemcova has taken her place among Czech national icons.

3 People's and Public schools in Czechoslovakia

In the 18th century the state intervened in the evolution of schools - in 1877 Empress Maria Theresa issued the Ratio Educationis decree, which reformed all levels of education. After the passing of a law regarding six years of compulsory school attendance in 1868, people's schools were fundamentally changed, and could now also be secular. During the First Czechoslovak Republic, the Small School Law of 1922 increased compulsory school attendance to eight years. The lower grades of people's schools were public schools (four years) and the higher grades were council schools. A council school was a general education school for youth between the ages of 10 and 15. Council schools were created in the last quarter of the 19th century as having 4 years, and were usually state-run. Their curriculum was dominated by natural sciences with a practical orientation towards trade and business. During the First Czechoslovak Republic they became 3-year with a 1-year course. After 1945 their curriculum was merged with that of lower gymnasium. After 1948 they disappeared, because all schools were nationalized.

4 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.

5 Death march

the Germans, in fear of the approaching Allied armies, tried to erase evidence of the concentration camps. They often destroyed all the facilities and forced all Jews regardless of their age or sex to go on a death march. This march often led nowhere, there was no concrete destination. The marchers got no food and no rest at night. It was solely up to the guards how they treated the prisoners, how they acted towards them, what they gave them to eat and they even had the power of their life or death in their hands. The conditions during the march were so cruel that this journey became a journey that ended in death for many.

6 Feuchtwanger, Lion (1884-1958)

German-Jewish novelist, noted for his choice of historical and political themes and the use of psychoanalytic ideas in the development of his characters. He was a friend of Bertolt Brecht and collaborated with him on several plays. Feuchtwanger was an active pacifist and socialist and the rise of Nazism forced him to leave his native Germany for first France and then the USA in 1940. He wrote extensively on ancient Jewish history, also as a metaphor to criticize the European political situation of the time. Among his main work are the trilogy 'The Waiting Room' and 'Josephus' (1932).

7 Neolog Jewry

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

8 Derer, Ivan (1884-1973)

Slovak lawyer and social democratic politician, co-author of the Martin Declaration, 1918-1939 member of the National Assembly; 1920 minister in charge of the administration of Slovakia, 1920-21 and 1926 Minister of Unification, 1929-1934 Minister of Education and National Enlightenment, 1934-1938 Minister of Justice; 1926- 1938 Chairman of the Provincial Committee of the Social Democratic Party in Slovakia. A proponent of Czechoslovakism. During World War II active in anti-Fascist resistance in the Czech lands; 1944-45 jailed, 1946-1948 president of the Supreme Court and honorary chairman of the Labor Party. In 1968 he campaigned against the federalization of Czechoslovakia.

9 Slovak State (1939-1945)

Czechoslovakia, which was created after the disintegration of Austria-Hungary, lasted until it was broken up by the Munich Pact of 1938; Slovakia became a separate (autonomous) republic on 6th October 1938 with Jozef Tiso as Slovak PM. Becoming suspicious of the Slovakian moves to gain independence, the Prague government applied martial law and deposed Tiso at the beginning of March 1939, replacing him with Karol Sidor. Slovakian personalities appealed to Hitler, who used this appeal as a pretext for making Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia a German protectorate. On 14th March 1939 the Slovak Diet declared the independence of Slovakia, which in fact was a nominal one, tightly controlled by Nazi Germany.

10 Horthy, Miklos (1868-1957)

Regent of Hungary from 1920 to 1944. Relying on the conservative plutocrats and the great landowners and Christian middle classes, he maintained a right-wing regime in interwar Hungary. In foreign policy he tried to attain the revision of the Trianon peace treaty - on the basis of which two thirds of Hungary's territory were seceded after WWI - which led to Hungary entering WWII as an ally of Germany and Italy. When the Germans occupied Hungary in March 1944, Horthy was forced to appoint as Prime Minister the former ambassador of Hungary in Berlin, who organized the deportations of Hungarian Jews. On 15th October 1944 Horthy announced on the radio that he would ask the Allied Powers for truce. The leader of the extreme right-wing fascist Arrow Cross Party, Ferenc Szalasi, supported by the German army, took over power. Horthy was detained in Germany and was later liberated by American troops. He moved to Portugal in 1949 and died there in 1957.

11 First Vienna Decision

On 2nd November 1938 a German-Italian international committee in Vienna obliged Czechoslovakia to surrender much of the southern Slovakian territories that were inhabited mainly by Hungarians. The cities of Kassa (Kosice), Komarom (Komarno), Ersekujvar (Nove Zamky), Ungvar (Uzhorod) and Munkacs (Mukacevo), all in all 11.927 km² of land, and a population of 1.6 million people became part of Hungary. According to the Hungarian census in 1941 84% of the people in the annexed lands were Hungarian-speaking.

12 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.

13 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.

14 Arrow Cross Party

The most extreme of the Hungarian fascist movements in the mid-1930s. The party consisted of several groups, though the name is now commonly associated with the faction organized by Ferenc Szalasi and Kalman Hubay in 1938. Following the Nazi pattern, the party promised not only the establishment of a fascist-type system including social reforms, but also the 'solution of the Jewish question'. The party's uniform consisted of a green shirt and a badge with a set of crossed arrows, a Hungarian version of the swastika, on it. On 15th October 1944, when Governor Horthy

announced Hungary's withdrawal from the war, the Arrow Cross seized power with military help from the Germans. The Arrow Cross government ordered general mobilization and enforced a regime of terror which, though directed chiefly against the Jews, also inflicted heavy suffering on the Hungarians. It was responsible for the deportation and death of tens of thousands of Jews. After the Soviet army liberated the whole of Hungary by early April 1945, Szalasi and his Arrow Cross ministers were brought to trial and executed

15 19th March 1944

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

16 Joseph II (1741-1790)

Holy Roman Emperor, king of Bohemia and Hungary (1780-1790), a representative figure of enlightened absolutism. He carried out a complex program of political, economic, social and cultural reforms. His main aims were religious toleration, unrestricted trade and education, and a reduction in the power of the Church. These views were reflected in his policy toward Jews. His ‚Judenreformen' (Jewish reforms) and the ‚Toleranzpatent' (Edict of Tolerance) granted Jews several important rights that they had been deprived of before: they were allowed to settle in royal free cities, rent land, engage in crafts and commerce, become members of guilds, etc. Joseph had several laws which didn't help Jewish interests: he prohibited the use of Hebrew and Yiddish in business and public records, he abolished rabbinical jurisdiction and introduced liability for military service. A special decree ordered all the Jews to select a German family name for themselves. Joseph's reign introduced some civic improvement into the life of the Jews in the Empire, and also supported cultural and linguistic assimilation. As a result, controversy arose between liberal-minded and orthodox Jews, which is considered the root cause of the schism between the Orthodox and the Neolog Jewry.