Ruzena Deutschova

Ruzena Deutschova
nee Rozalia Eilander
Galanta
Slovakia
Interviewed by: Martin Korcok
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Ruzena Deutschova lives in a house with a garden in Galanta. This lively elderly lady wasn't always without emotions during our meetings when she told us of the extraordinary events of her life. The interview was completed in five conversations. Ruzena Deutschova is one of those few to whom the lifestyle of Jews before the war is not unknown. In Galanta, aside from her, there are only five people whose memories we could rely on, and from whose testimony we could collect a verifiable picture of the previous period.

My family background

My father's great grandparents were from Dombo, for sure, they came from Subcarpathia 1, from Ungvar [Uzhhorod]. Dombo belonged to Tecso county during the First Czechoslovakian Republic2. It was close to Huszt [Khust], Beregszasz [Berehevo] and Maramarossziget. The people from the area went there, when they needed something, or had to go to the hospital. I don't remember now if there was a hospital in Beregszasz or Huszt [Hospital was in Beregszasz]. But it wasn't far.

The residents of Dombo were Jews and Ruthenians [sometimes called Rusyns]. There were two schools in the village, the Ruthenian and the Czech one. Most of the Jews went to the state Czech school., There were mostly Jews living in the village, and richer Ruthenians like the tavern owner and the teachers. The Ruthenians lived in the hills outside of the village, I remember that.

There were a lot of Jews living in the village. As I was very small, I only vaguely remember these things, but I know that the locals went to two prayer houses [bet midrash]. All the Jewish families were very religious. There was great poverty there. My great grandparents, my grandparents, my parents all were very poor. They lived from one day to the next. And we ate corn bread, my mother

made brioche only on the Sabbath, and barkhes. We didn't even know about white or black bread, you only got cornbread in Dombo. I don't remember a thing about my great grandparents, so I couldn't know what they did.

It's difficult to remember my grandparents, since I saw them last when I was seven years old. [They moved to Felsoszeli]. I also couldn't have known my maternal grandfather, since he died before I came into the world. All I know about him, was that his first name was Lax. One time, still in Dombo, they took me out to the cemetery, and said, this is where your grandfather is lying. I never went to his grave again.

My mother's mother lived with us. She was called Jechevet. Mother's brother, Uncle Lax Wolf, who lived in America, helped us build a house. Mother had to support Grandma, that's why Uncle built us a three-room house with a little kitchen. There was a stove in the kitchen, we baked and cooked there. Grandma was a midwife.

I turned six, and I remember that Grandma slept in a separate room. Grandma was very deaf. If they knocked on her window at night, it woke me up, I went in to her, and shook her. I told her in Yiddish that they're knocking. I also remember as a child, that Grandma's gravestone was bought, I don't know how many years earlier, and was put next to the house in the garden. She really loved to work in the garden – crimson rambler roses bloomed there – she collected their petals and cooked syrup from them. She collected many kinds of herbs, if a cure was needed, she found one for almost every malady. If the family was poor, she would cure them for free. She didn't accept money from the poor, my mother always talked about that.

My father's parents lived across from us on the other side of the street. They heated with wood, and since there wasn't electricity, they lit with [mineral spirit] lamps. Grandpa Izsak Eilander was a tailor. We called Grandpa, 'Zaidi'. I remember him sitting at a machine with a black kippah on his head. He wore a big beard. I remember a funny story connected with him. When I went to their house, he took me on his knee and said, 'Gib mir ain kis' [give me a kiss - Yiddish]. I didn't want to give him a kiss, since he stunk of garlic. Grandpa laughed, but I always got a piece of candy for it.

Grandma Rachel, my father's mother was a fat lady. She lived with Grandpa in a two-room house. They kept a cow. The stable was in the courtyard. Aunt Hindi, who was my father's uncle's wife – unfortunately, I don't remember her name anymore – she and I went to feed the cow in the stable. She sent me up to the loft, and I threw down the hay from there. Aunt Hindi was fat, she didn't fit up the ladder, that's why she sent me.

Grandma wore a black skirt, blue apron, black headscarf and 'pruszliks' [Hungarian style bodices]. On her feet, she wore high-legged lace-up shoes of fine zsevro leather [Sevro leather – finely worked goatskin used for shoe uppers]. Grandma also wore a scarf over her wig. Grandpa went in trousers, a vest and shirtsleeves. He grew his payes, as did all the Jewish men of Dombo. My father had a beard, too, and payes. On his head, he wore a kippah. He didn't wear a hat at home. The majority of Jewish men wore kaftans [It is likely that the community in Dombo were Hasidim], and they also wore streimels, but that was only what Father usually told us.

I don't know anything about the siblings of my grandparents. Mother never spoke about them. My grandparents never talked about their childhood, either. I was seven years old when we moved away from Dombo. Yet, I never saw my grandparents again after that.

I’m sure my father, Lajos Eilander was born in Dombo in 1902. In the town of his birth, everyone called him by his Jewish name, Arje. I remember, that from morning to evening, he sat by the sewing machine, he pedaled it, and just sewed and sewed. It wasn’t easy supporting eight children. Every morning, he tied on the straps, the tefillin and prayed in the kitchen or the big room. In Dombo he still prayed alone, because Benci was still very small then. He was a quiet man, he lived only for his work.

My mother was called Malke. She was born in 1901, so she was a year older than my father. At home, she always wore a headscarf, but if she went out on the street, she put her wig on. In Galanta, if she was going to temple, she put her hat on her wig, but she didn’t in Subcarpathia. My mother wore long-sleeved dresses, even in the summer.

She always cooked well, she was a very good housewife, always knew how to economize. She worked a lot, washed a lot and ironed. Despite that we were poor. She made warm dinners so we would get our fill. The meal varied. Although Mother never had help with anything, she always made time for us. She combed our hair with her own hands when we came from school, and she made sure there wasn’t a chance we’d get one louse, she especially watched out for that.

I don’t know how my parents got to know each other, unfortunately. I don’t even know when they were married [1924 – determined later from the photos]. They were married in Dombo, in the synagogue. The marriage certificate was written in Russian. My parents spoke Yiddish between themselves. When they didn’t want us kids to understand what they were talking about they switched over to Romanian, Ruthenian or Hungarian.

My parents were strongly orthodox Jews. They kept a kosher household. Everything at home was kosher. They kept all the holidays. For example, when it was Rosh Hashanah and then the Day of Atonement came a week later, Yom Kippur, we always fasted from evening to the next evening. We held every fast, us children, too. There was the fast of Ester [Purim]. There wasn’t a fast that I didn’t keep from the time I was twelve years old. My mother often visited the mikveh in Dombo. It was in a building at the bottom of the hill. I remember as a child, Mother often took us with her as well to bathe. In the baths, there were big wooden tubs. First Mother would dunk herself, then she would wash us. I’m sure she paid something for the warm water, we took soap with us. My father also went to the mikveh, because he was very religious. At the coming of the Sabbath, the men would go into the bet midrash dressed in a black kaftan, with a streimel on their heads.

In Dombo, we heated our house with wood, and lit with [mineral spirit] lamps - one by my father’s sewing machine, and one hung by the table. We didn’t have electricity. We lived in a house with a garden, whatever we needed, grew there. We had a lot of apples, we raised poultry, geese for ourselves. The furnishings were humble. There were two beds in the bedroom, with two standing chests of drawers. Below, in the drawers, we usually kept fresh-baked biscuits, crescent rolls. Nobody helped with the household chores, we never had a maid, anyway, we never had the money for one. We were very poor in Dombo.

In Dombo, we only had Jewish neighbors, as little children we played together with them. Dad would sew rag dolls, make little tables of wood. He even sewed clothes for us, while we were small. We went to a river, I don’t know the name anymore, to swim. Dombo was in a mountainous area, full of forests. We drove the geese up to the top of the mountain to mind them, and we played a lot then. The ground was clay, I remember, we made all kinds of biscuits out of it. We decorated them

with little flowers, that's how we played. Sometimes the geese would swim out on the water, straight to the nearby watermill wheel, from where they couldn't get back, we lost them that way. We cried, that's for sure. I don't know which river it was, but it was a big river. They floated rafts of cut trees down the river to the sawmill.

I remember that Mother had an uncle in America. He lived in New York and when he came back in the 1930s, he took me in his arms, and put an earring in my ear. He also brought a pretty pink dress, with a cape and little patent-leather shoes. This American uncle was a tailor himself, he worked in his own tailor shop. He sent grandma a picture, with him, his wife and his daughter. He was missing the kippah on his head. Grandma sent the picture back, saying: 'This isn't my son, my son had a head [brain], but this guy doesn't have a head'.

Among the siblings of my mother, the oldest was called Aunt Jente Joszkovits. They lived in Dombo one street over. I remember that on Saturday I always ran over to their house, because I got pumpkin seeds from them. Uncle had one eye tied with a piece of leather, because they shot out his eye in the First World War [Military in the Austro-Hungarian Empire] 3. I felt good at their house, because they had a daughter with whom I made friends. Sadly, I don't remember her name.

My mother's other sister, Rabbi Nuszn's wife, lived in Romania. I was told they were really religious. The lady died young from cancer. I know that because Grandma wrote that in a letter to us. That's all we got to know about her death. Dad hid the letter away from Mother for a long time, but he finally told her what happened, anyway. We were already living in Felsoszeli then. I don't know how many children they had, I think, there were six. During the Second World War, they were in an area in Romania where they didn't deport the Jews. My uncle ended up there with his children. Immediately after the war, as soon as Romania was liberated, he left for Palestine with the children. In 1978, when I was in Israel for the first time, I met with my cousins. Two among them are still living in Tel Aviv, the others have died.

My father had an uncle, who lived in Antwerp, Belgium, but he didn't have a family. He helped the other family members also, but predominantly us. He always wrote to my mother to have us girls learn some trade, he'll find us husbands, just make sure everyone has a trade. The Second World War obviously wrecked those plans. They deported the Jews from Belgium also, that's how he never returned.

The only sibling of my father's that I knew personally was Aunt Etus. Her husband was called Nachman Tevlovits. They lived in Prague. Directly before the war, they had a daughter, Jindricka. I never visited them before the war, so I can't say anything about them. They were taken away to the Theresienstadt 4 concentration camp. They were lucky because my uncle was a very clever man, he wove baskets from willow branches, and chairs and baby carriages. The Germans spared his life because of it, since they always needed something. He went down to the river to collect the willow branches. He set traps for the ravens, which my aunt made soup from. This is how the whole family escaped. They spent three or four years in the Theresienstadt concentration camp.

When they were liberated, Aunt Etus told me, they went back to Prague in a horse-drawn carriage. They lived in a family home on the outskirts. In 1947, I married in Prague, and the reception feast was held in their house. After the war, until I married, I often stayed at their house. My aunt really loved me, I even resembled her. When her daughter was born, Evike, I washed diapers for her, and cooked for them. I helped them a lot. In February of 1948 5, before the Communists took complete

control in Czechoslovakia, they emigrated to America. My uncle also had a friend living there, who sent a letter of invitation [required for US visa] and ship's passage. Father went to say goodbye. They never saw each other again. Why they left, I don't know. Maybe, they would have locked up my uncle, for having a broom factory.

At first, they lived in America in New York, from there in Michigan, then they moved to Detroit, where they belonged to an orthodox religious community. Their only son was born in Detroit, Ervin, who got the Jewish name Jichak. Aunt Etus spoke Yiddish with her children. After the political changes [1989]6, I visited them once in Detroit. I met my Aunt, Jindricka and Jichak. We spoke in Yiddish because my aunt couldn't speak a word of Hungarian anymore. She only knew enough to write in Hungarian in her letters, 'csokol Etus'['kisses Etus']. She could write that still. My aunt died at the age of ninety-three. She's buried in the Jewish cemetery in Detroit.

Jindricka remembered my wedding, and how she always asked her mother, 'Mami, kdy budu ja takova slezna jako Ruzenka?' [Mommy, when will I be a big girl like Rozika?] They called me Ruzenka in Prague. She remembered that. That made me very happy. When I was in America, Jindricka was about 64-65 years old. Jindricka was divorced from her husband, she has two families, both chose Jewish spouses. Today Jindricka is a retired teacher, her son is a pharmacist. Her daughter worked with computers, but she's also retired now. The children are not religious, anymore. The son still goes to temple, but he's not so religious. The girls [Jindricka and Evicka] don't go to temple anymore either. Jindricka's children live in Chicago, I didn't meet them. I saw one of the daughters and the son of my other cousin, Jichak. The girl was a university student. His other daughter was living in Caracas then, I didn't meet her.

Growing up

I was born in 1927 in Dombo. Everyone spoke Yiddish in Dombo. My mother-tongue was also Yiddish. I have no memories at all from my early childhood. I didn't go to a nursery school, I was with my mother all the way until I was of schooling age. In first grade, I went to a Czech state school, there I learned a little Czech. Aside from Yiddish, my parents spoke Romanian, Ruthenian and Hungarian.

There was great poverty in Subcarpathia. In 1933 and 1934, we moved to Felsoszeli. My uncle, my father's uncle, was employed with the Singer company as a traveling salesman. He travelled the whole of Czechoslovakia. He found out there was a Jewish school in Felsoszeli, but it didn't have the required number of children to receive state support. By the time we stumbled over there, they had the required number, because there were six of us kids, and three of us were already in school. That's how the Felsoszeli Jewish school got state support.

Father came to [Felso-] Szeli to live. We didn't have any relatives there. He lived there for about a year alone, collected his pay and sent it home. Then we also wandered over. In Szeli there wasn't a tailor, that's how he became the Jewish tailor.

In Felsoszeli, only the wealthier people had electricity, but they didn't have indoor plumbing, either. They brought water from the well. There wasn't a sidewalk. If you had to go to Galanta for medicine, then I ran on foot into the city from Felsoszeli. I took off my shoes, so the soles wouldn't wear out. Mother put a wet rag in the bag. On the Galanta bridge, first I wiped off my dusty feet, and only then did I put my shoes on, because we were obedient children. That's how I came to

Galanta to the pharmacy. On the way home, I took my shoes off again on the bridge, and put them in the bag, so they wouldn't wear down. Lowinger, the village doctor, had an automobile, and probably the local factory owners, Eisler and Szold, did too. The majority of the peasants had horse-wagons.

The lifestyles of Dombo and Felsoszeli were very different. We still spoke Yiddish at home, but the Felsoszeli kids didn't understand what we said anymore, only a couple old Jews still knew Yiddish. In Felsoszeli, our life was easier, a lot easier. In Dombo, there was a cobbler and tailor in almost every home. The Ruthenians had their dress and work clothes sewn from thick felt, they worked outside. They paid him, not with money, but with milk and sheep cheese. In Felsoszeli, Father was the only tailor. They respected him and liked him a lot, everybody went to 'the Jewish tailor' to get their clothes made. He got money for his work, just those who didn't have money, they brought chickens, flour or eggs. The Jews also supported us, the religious community, also. There was a liquor factory on the edge of the village, Eisler and Szold were the owners. Mr. Szold kept us stocked full with potatoes and firewood. The community covered the cost of a doctor when someone got sick.

There wasn't a typical occupation for Jews in Felsoszeli. They were chicken farmers, goose farmers, and merchants. Some worked for Szold in the liquor factory, and some in agriculture. In Dombo, the typical occupation for Jews was tailor and cobbler. Each opened a shop in their own homes. There were sawmills in Dombo, where they employed mostly Jews. The Jews of Dombo had hard lives, very poor lives. Many of them emigrated to America, like my mother's older brother, Uncle Wolf did.

There was no rabbi in Felsoszeli, just two shochetim. The closest rabbis lived in Galanta, where there were two orthodox communities. One of them was led by Buxbaum, the other by Rabbi Seidl. Unfortunately, I don't remember the name of our cantor or the president of the community. The shochetim, Krakauer and Ehlbaum usually led the prayers. The bet midrash in Felsoszeli stood in the street where the Catholic church is. There was a large courtyard attached to it, the Jewish school building was there, too. They went to religious class in the building behind the Jewish school. Next, there was the apartment of one of the shochetim, then the other shochet. We went to both shochetim, but mostly to Krakauer. Both were orthodox, but just part of the Szeli community was drawn here, the other part went to Ehlbaum. The Krakauers had a big family, they naturally went to Krakauer. The Mullers lived in Szeli, the Schwartzes too, they went to Ehlbaum. The Krakauers originally came from Dunaszerdahely, I don't remember where the Ehlbaums came from. The mikveh was in the last building.

We only kept Hebrew books at home, among them was the complete Mahzor, so they were prayer books, for example, the Day of Atonement prayers, Kol Nidre, the five books of Moses. My parents read these books daily, and prayed regularly, morning and evening, too.

My parents kept every tradition, they were strictly religious. My mother kept a kosher household. There were special meat plates, and special milk plates. After eating meat, I couldn't eat milk for six hours. Before meals we always washed our hands, we had to say prayers for everything, for the water, for everything. We kept these [traditions] also, from childhood. I remember when I first fasted, it was the fast of Ester. In the temple, they read about the life of Ester. As soon as the holiday ended, Mother was waiting for us in front of the bet midrash. She brought one slice of

bread in her bag for everyone, so that we could make the trip home.

At the Sabbath, as soon as Father came out of temple with the boys, he blessed us. He came home, the holiday dinner had been made by then, Mother baked the barkhes. It was meager, but we had it. During the week, she always collected the ingredients. On winter days, everyone got an apple or pumpkin seeds. The pumpkin seeds they poured out into glasses for us, so we wouldn't fight about them, and everyone would get the same. In the village, the Jews got dressed up in holiday clothes for Sabbath, but nobody wore kaftans and streimels.

Father also went often to the mikveh in Felsoszeli, then he was still very religious. My mom went there monthly with the children the same as in Dombo. Aside from that, we had to wash every morning behind a 'Spanish wall'. There was a washbasin and water in it. It took a while for all the children to get washed up. We washed one after the other. Once a week we bathed in a wooden tub. Mother warmed the water outside, of course not everybody got fresh water, just warm water poured on them. In summer, on Friday afternoon we bathed, in winter it was on Thursday since the Sabbath comes earlier in the winter.

I vaguely remember my older brother's bar mitzvah. His was in Felsoszeli, my mother had the cake baked at the Lowinger confectioners in Galanta. I was about ten years old when my mother sent me on foot from Felsoszeli to Galanta. The distance between the two places is about twelve kilometers (7.4 miles). The Lowingers had already put the cake into two large boxes beforehand. On the way back, I was lucky because a railway hand-car picked me up. I don't remember the bar mitzvah really, as I didn't go to the bet midrash, I only knew that all the Jewish men came to visit us that afternoon.

In Dombo, as I mentioned, I went to a Czech school, in Felsoszeli I went to a Jewish school. I went to that school for six years, from first grade to sixth grade. The teacher lady, Helena Bergerova, I believe, was from Nagyszombat. She only taught me for a short time. Then came Zoltan Reisner, a teacher from Bazin. I was in the same class with Hasi Muller, for example. In September of 2004, they buried him in the Galanta Jewish cemetery. He was the last from Galanta, who was a Galanta yeshivah student, where they continued their studies under the direction of Rabbi Duschinski and later, Rabbi Buxbaum. My later husband also went there, Herman Deutsch.

My favorite subject was history. I love it to this day. There was a teacher in Galanta whom I particularly didn't like, because she always made exceptions for the children with wealthier parents. She always called me 'Eilander'. 'Hold out your hand', and she gave us the cane rod. Zoltan Reisner was my favorite teacher. He came back here after the war, to Galanta, and wanted to marry me. I would have married him for sure, if I hadn't become the woman of Herman Deutsch in the meantime.

I never encountered anti-Semitism in school, nor with my teachers, even though I went to an exclusively Jewish school, and the teachers themselves were Jewish. I didn't take any extra music classes or language classes, there wouldn't have been money for it anyway. I made friends in school, with some exceptions, Jews lived in my direct surroundings.

We lived in a common courtyard with an old woman in Felsoszeli, Miss Paula and a Lutheran family, the Kozaks. Miss Paula had a small textile business. If she needed something, she would send one of us kids to run along after it. Mr. Kozak was a carpenter. He had three families, two girls and one

boy. Despite that my parents were on good terms with them, they rarely visited each other. They mutually respected one another's religion. The Kozaks, for example, when they slaughtered, they put flour, eggs and a live duck in the breadbasket. That's what they brought from 'the slaughter'. At Christmas and Easter, they always gave us fruits and walnuts. They never brought brioche, because they knew we couldn't eat it, since it wasn't kosher. I remember that they respected our religion. The courtyard was wide. We had a garden, which we worked. My mother raised poultry and ducks. Beyond the courtyard, the Dudvag [river] meandered.

My parents only went to the bet midrash, they never made time to visit friends, they simply had no time. They worked hard, Father sewed, Mother was occupied with the kids. Sometimes washing clothes, sometimes ironing, there wasn't time for that kind of thing [visiting friends].

We didn't know what summer vacation meant, there was no such thing. Mother went for two or three months to visit her mother in Dombo. She usually took the smallest of my siblings with her, since the smallest still needed her anyway. They would pick all kinds of fruits and mushrooms in the Dombo forests. They dried those and sent them home. Those of us who were already a bit bigger, stayed home, because school started in September. Mother only got home later for the fall holidays. The last time she went home to Dombo was in the summer of 1940 or 1941. That's when she saw her mother last, too.

There wasn't a market in Felsoszeli, in Dombo, either. Only in Galanta. Everything that we needed was grown in Felsoszeli. I remember, there were market days, but how often, I don't know. They came from Dunaszerdahely and elsewhere to the market day. When I was a little girl, at about ten or eleven years old, I already watched out so they didn't steal. I always got a piece of material, which I then had a skirt or dress made from. The family didn't have a regular merchant who they could have ordered anything from.

In Felsoszeli, where we lived, a big Communist was living there, and he had a son. His name was Bela Katyo. As we left the village, there was a bridge, the Rakottyasi bridge. We always teased Bela, 'Hey look, Hitler's coming across the Rakottyasi bridge, to take away the Communists.' That happened in about 1934-35, there wasn't any anti-Jewish atmosphere, yet. I was never made aware in my childhood that I was Jewish. No, not ever.

During the war

In 1938, when the Hungarians came in [First Vienna Decision][7], the very next week, they expelled us from the village, [saying] that Father was a 'Bolshevik'. We didn't even know what that word meant at the time. We'd been really okay in Felsoszeli, till then we'd had no problems with anyone. They wanted to send us back to Subcarpathia, because we didn't have our Hungarian citizenship arranged. With the coming of winter, they only expelled us to the edge of the village, to Barakony. In December, it was already freezing, my parents were railroaded out into the cold, under the open sky with six children. The Jews in Galanta immediately intervened as well as they could. They sent a car and took us in it to Galanta. That was the first time I ever rode in an automobile. Right away we got a furnished room with beds. The Jewish community arranged these things, I don't remember concrete people, sadly. They even when so far as to get us a residence permit, but my father had to report to the border police every day. Meanwhile, Hungary re-annexed Subcarpathia. My uncle in Belgium sent money, that's how we got our citizenship. After this happened, Mother didn't want to go back to Felsoszeli, so we stayed in Galanta.

I had eight siblings. Between my oldest brother Beno and the littlest, Miksa, there was a difference of fifteen years. Beno, Hana, Sari [from Sarolta], Manci [from Maria] and Eszti [from Eszter] were born in Dombo. Sandor, Gizike[from Gizella] were born in Felsoszeli, and Miksa was born in Galanta. I only vaguely remember my youngest siblings, since I was with them a relatively short time. My mother took the littlest ones with her in the summer break to Grandma in Dombo, so I didn't see them for three months.

Beno, my oldest brother was a very hard-working kid. He learned the tailoring trade in Szenc. When my father was conscripted into work service [forced labor]8, then he supported the family, by that time already working in Pest [Budapest] in a tailor shop. He passed away during the Second World War. Mother adored him.

I spent the most time with my little sister, Hana. In Felsoszeli, the Dudvag flowed behind our house. In the winter, we skated on the frozen water, and sledded. Father made the skates out of wood. In the summertime, we picked corn ears, because our mother raised chickens. We worked the whole summer vacation.

I was together with Hanna in the Allendorf labor camp [a sub-camp of Buchenwald]. When we were liberated, we went home together. Hana stayed a while in Galanta, but in spring of 1946, she went to Kassa, and left from there with her later husband for Palestine. They captured the boat, the passengers were forced to debark in Cyprus. I wrote letters to her, and she sent pictures from there. They went by boat from Cyprus on to Israel. There she was conscripted as a soldier.

Hana's husband fell during some kind of construction very young, and died. He was a Kassa boy. They had three families[children – sic]. I can't speak with them. If I go visit them, they say, 'Dada neni, shalom', give me a kiss, then leave again, when I go home, they say shalom again and another kiss and that's all. One of Hana's daughter's is a teacher, her name is Malke. My daughter also has this Jewish name, we named them then after our mother. Malke's husband's parents come from Morocco. My other niece, Sara was a bank official, but since she married, she doesn't work anymore. She lives with her two daughters in Tel Aviv. Hanna's son is with Markus Eli wholesale hardware, and meanwhile is finishing his law studies. His wife's parents went to Israel from Poland. Hana and her son's family live today in Netanya. They keep Jewish traditions, and both keep a kosher household.

My other sister, Sarika, who we called Sara, was a very smart and pretty little girl. She was writing verses at the age of six. I don't really remember Esztike [from Eszter] and Manci. Sandor, who was born Salamon, and whom we called Sauli, was born in the winter of 1935. He was a pretty child. He used to fetch the chulent from the baker for the well-to-do people. He always got a few filler [pennies] for it. He bought Mother a wooden spoon by mistake for her birthday, but started shouting from afar that he'd bought her a salt shaker. We made fun of that for a long time, to this day I still smile to think about it. I don't have memories of Gizike and Miksa, unfortunately. My youngest brother, Miksa was just four years old when he and Mother, Sari, Manci, Eszter and Sandor were gassed.

We kept all the Jewish holidays in my childhood, the traditions. As many fasts as the Jews have, we kept them all, that is, us girls had to keep them. The men had to fast every week, but we didn't have to do that. On Saturday mornings, as soon as we woke up, the brioche, the holiday breakfast was waiting for us. Father left for the temple, and came home at noon. We brought the chulent

from the baker, and ate our holiday supper. The chulent was baked at two bakeries, at Schultz's and at Lichtner's. We made it at home, put meat in it, and everything which we had around. My mother filled it with water, tied it up, put the cover on it. She wrote her name on it, too. Friday afternoon Mother took it to the baker. We took ours to Schultz's. they put it in the oven. If it ended up in a good place, then the chulent was good. Sometimes though, it was still half-raw, but sometimes it burned. They said that chulent was just like marriage. My parents rested in the afternoon, we went out to the walk in the castle. We played with young people. On Saturday, you could only read, or in the afternoon, when I was still young, in the Jewish girl's school – I went to the Beys Jakov.

On the Day of Atonement [Yom Kippur] and the new year [Rosh Hashanah] Mother went to temple. That's when she always dressed up nicely. She had pretty dresses, my uncle sent them to her from America. Before she would step out of the house, she put her wig and hat on her head. The girls didn't go with her to temple until they turned twelve years old. Us little girls only went on holidays to temple to see Mother, mostly we played downstairs in the prayer house courtyard. There were a lot of us in the courtyard. The boys were already sitting in the synagogue, and the men prayed, mainly if they had passed their thirteenth year [that is, they had already had their bar mitzvah].

On the Day of Atonement we fasted. From the age of twelve, we had to fast all day, we made it. On the tent holiday [Sukkot], we set up a tent, decorated it, put stars on it, and then just went to see the others, to see whose was the prettiest. Father usually set up the tent in the yard. If four Jewish families lived on one courtyard, all four families set up a separate tent. They spent the whole holiday there, they could only go inside to sleep, they had to eat in the tent. Even if it rained, they ate standing in the tent.

We went to synagogue every holiday, during Pesach, and Pentecost [Shavuot – sic]. On Pentecost [sic], they decorated the synagogue with flowers, it was a joyous celebration. On the Day of Atonement and the New Year were celebrated only in the synagogue, afterwards the holiday lunch and dinner followed at home. We prayed in the synagogue. My favorite Jewish holiday is Pentecost [sic], because then people could eat what they wanted and, of course, wherever they wanted. At Passover, we couldn't eat whatever we wanted, and during the tent holiday, we couldn't eat wherever we wanted. That's why the best holiday is Pentecost.[Shavuot – sic]

My parents passed on nearly everything from the Jewish traditions and religion to us. We were a proper orthodox Jewish family. I always told my mother that if I get married, I wouldn't wear a wig. She answered, 'Your hair will fall out'. My father and my uncle wore 'cicith all the way up until they were deported, in fact, I remember my older brother even took a couple with him to the lager. In our family, the men grew their payes, and my father had a beard. He cut his beard off in 1938, under the Hungarians, but my older brother kept wearing payes.

Around that time there were two orthodox communities, one led by Rabbi Buxbaum, the other by Rabbi Seidl. Both rabbis had separate courtyards. In both courtyards there was a synagogue and a mikveh. We belonged to Rabbi Buxbaum's congregation, who my parents thought was more religious. In spite of that, my mother went to the other mikveh, in the Seidl courtyard. That was where shochter Vogel's wife was the mikveh lady. The Vogels were also from Subcarpathia, we were closer to them. Mother also took us there to bathe, surely because we didn't have to pay there. The mikveh was lined inside with white tiles. The ladies dressed in changing rooms. They

bathed in the tubs and in the end they dunked themselves in the pool, which was in the center of the room. Before the war, all the Galanta Jewish ladies regularly went to the mikveh. The other mikveh was in the yard of Rabbi Buxbaum, where the holocaust memorial is today.

There was a temple, the yeshivah and the three-room apartment of the rabbi in the Buxbaum courtyard. In the yard there was a kitchen, then there were two places where the bocherim studied. On the other side of the temple was a ‘mensa’ and a cheder, where the younger children went. The bocherim and the poor ate in the ‘mensa’. There was a matzah oven in the courtyard and a butcher shop in front. The owner of the butcher shop was my husband’s uncle Hirschler. The shochet lived at the end of the courtyard, whose name was Weinstein and so did Rabbi Buxbaum’s son. When we ended up in Galanta, we lived there, too. Later, we had to leave there because they put in a Schlafstube [a room to sleep in] for the shnorrerim and the poor.

A lot of shnorrerim came to Galanta, most of them arriving from Subcarpathia, where the poverty was very bad. They didn’t come to our house. There was a married couple living not too far from our house, who were very poor. Mother brought a little flour and eggs over to them every Thursday, that’s how she helped people even poorer than we were. I don’t remember the couple’s name anymore. They were taken to Auschwitz during the war. They never came back.

The family called Muller lived in the front of Rabbi Seidl’s courtyard. Rabbi Seidl lived behind them in the house. Rabbi Seitl died when I was a little girl, still before the Second World War. I only knew his wife. They had two daughters. One of the girls taught me how to pray in the Bet Jakov. Shochet Vogel, who’s house was next to the mikveh, lived across the street from them. After the mikveh, came the synagogue. The younger Rabbi Seidl, who took the community over after his father, lived in the building behind the synagogue. In the house after the rabbi’s house was Deutsch’s house, who was the cantor and teacher. He taught religion in the first two rooms and the Deutsch family lived in the rest. Then came the old people’s home. You could enter the courtyard from two sides. On one side was the court building, the other door opened on the main street.

I never encountered anti-Semitism, even under the Hungarians. Neither the relatives nor neighbors ever talked about it. In 1944, we lived separately, I was in contact almost exclusively with Jews. I had a few Christian girlfriends, of course, we were still children. I was seventeen years old when they took me away.

The so-called ‘Jewish Codex’ put out in 1941 fundamentally changed our lives [In as much as Galanta belonged again to Hungary from November of 1938, she clearly must be referring to the Hungarian anti-Jewish Laws 9, whereas the Jewish Codex 10 was passed in the Slovakian Republic in 1938] Honestly speaking, a person felt like they’d robbed you of everything. They robbed me of my entire childhood. We couldn’t go to the cinema, we had to stop going to school. In Galanta, they locked the Jews up in the ghetto in 1944. [According to the 1941 census, 29 percent of the 5100 residents in Galanta were of Jewish religion. In May of 1944, 1100 local and 600 Jews from neighboring villages were crammed into the ghetto, situated in and around the synagogue.] From there, were went out to work in the fields. We worked for one or two months, then they took us away again to the Galanta manor, where there was a renaissance castle. We lived there in the castle. Everything there was in ruins. We lived in horrible conditions, we couldn’t cook, couldn’t wash, there was no toilet. We hoed corn on the manor, and radishes, spinach, and picked poppies, and whatever there was. I don’t know who’s estate it was. The whole family was still together then,

except for Father. He was assigned to work service [forced labor] in Mateszalka. I don't remember how long we were on the manor, anymore.

From there we were dragged off to the new town brick factory [Ersekujvar Kurzweil brick factory], where we stayed for two weeks. In the brick factory, we slept where the bricks were stored. We didn't work at all, just waited [to see] where and when they'd take us away. There were people from all over the area there. One day, they packed us into boxcars. Hungarian constables [Constable] 11, the 'rooster feathers' [for the feathers on their helmets] just hustled us into the boxcars, I don't know how many of us there were [According to Braham, 4843 Jews were put into deportation transports on June 12, the last of which left the city on June 15.]. We didn't think about what fate awaited us. Uncountable numbers of constables escorted us, and I'm not talking about Germans, I only remember the Hungarian constables, the rooster feathers. They stopped the train in Kassa because some among us died on the way. They put those people off, but didn't let us out. Nobody died in our boxcar. There were Hungarian constables everywhere in Kassa. Then we departed and didn't stop until we got to Auschwitz. I don't remember how the constables behaved, if they'd hurt me I would know. I don't know. I remember we threw little notes out of the cattle cars along the way with where they are taking us, and how they took us, and that kind of thing on them. The trip took a couple days. We constantly threw these messages out. I don't know what good that was then, but we threw them out. There could have been forty or fifty of us in the boxcar. There were whole families there, the children crying, hungry, thirsty without water nor a toilet. Just one bucket for all those people, it stank horribly. The whole family was still together then except for Father. When Mother saw Auschwitz, she said, 'There's no way out, anymore'. She felt that we'd arrived in a bad place, she knew what was happening.

As we arrived in Auschwitz, the train stopped. A man, who they later said was Mengele, just waved: Right, Left. My mother and siblings left, me and my sister were sent right, or vice versa, doesn't matter. My sister got lost among all the people in the meantime. I ran after Mother to help her with all the kids. Mother sent me away to 'find Hana, because you've got more brains than her, the family should be together'. I don't know about my older brother either, he also got mixed up in the crowds. They surely put him with the men, I don't remember that. As I ran around looking for my sister, Mengele gave me slap, and shoved me over to the other side, which saved my life. I broke into tears because I couldn't help my mother. We didn't know right away, what was happening, we didn't know.

They housed us in a barrack, where there were a lot of us. It was raining. There was standing water there, so we could only sleep sitting or standing. There were hundreds of us there in one place. You couldn't get any rest there. Every night someone went insane, ran around or messed themselves. There was no water there. We had to go out to a latrine, but nobody dared go out at night because they were afraid they'd be shot. We woke at dawn. They counted us. We stood in lines of five, a lot of us suffered at night because of the cold. In the daytime, a person agonized through 35 degree [C.- 95 degrees F.] heat. Every dawn, we were practically frozen, just standing in line. They poured coffee into a 'csajka' [a tin or alimunium plate with high sides] for breakfast, towards evening we got a little piece of bread with some bit of meat. We were continuously hungry. There was no water, they brought that from the cistern. You had to stand in line for water. My sister Hanna and I, and three girlfriends from Galanta stood in line. Of course, everybody pushed near the water. The SS soldiers hit the women with the metal [buckle] on their waist belts, as they scuffled for the

water. If someone was hit in the head, it could kill them. there were always a couple who died.

Once I got sick, I got typhus which causes a high fever. In the barrack, where we were, there was a place where they collected the sick. From there they took the sick along with the dead in a Red Cross car straight to the crematorium, we knew that. My sister, and girlfriends started crying, don't give up. As they all hustled out an SS woman came and gave me two slaps so hard I'll never forget them. I was seeing two candles burning in front of my eyes. My ear started bleeding, my mouth, everything, but I got better. I was able to go out, and I stood out there in line. The sickness went away, even though I didn't go to a doctor. A seventeen year old person wanted to stay alive. The Slovak girls who were living in the camp already for three years [the first transport of Jewish girls and women aged 16 -30 arrived from East Slovakia in Spring of 1942], they were the 'Lageralteste' or 'Stubendienst'[German – 'Camp elders' or 'Room Duty']. They always said, 'Do you see that smoke? They're burning. That's where your mother and sisters went'.

I found out about the death of Mother and my sisters still in Auschwitz, in July. We'd been there for two weeks, and we heard. We smelled it also, because it stank, the smell of burnt meat lingering constantly. New prisoners arrived daily. We were in barrack seven. I remember the gypsy [Roma] camp was on the other side, where there were German gypsies. One night we heard only that they were yelling, help, help, they're taking us to the crematorium. In the morning, everything was quiet, none of the gypsies were left there. They were all young, we couldn't get to them, there was an electrical fence separating us from them. We saw them. In their place came prisoners like us.

I met my mother's younger brother, Uncle Alter in Auschwitz. He unpacked the trains. The old man asked, who's with me. I said, 'Hana'. - 'Go to work, if they take you.' I asked him, 'Where's mother?'. He said, 'Mother's already in a good place.' He worked in the crematorium, with clothes. We reported for work a couple days later when there was a 'selection'. They took us to an area, there could have been thousands of us. They took a thousand for work. They put us on the night shift at the crematorium. In Silesia, the weather is terrible. It was so cold at night, we almost froze, while in the daytime, you can hardly stand the heat, it burned your skin. There was a woman from Pozsony [Bratislava]. It was cold, we were shivering, so she said she'd give us a little gas[heat], but we shouldn't yell. When she turned on the gas, we thought we were being gassed. Of course, we started screaming. She shut everything quickly so the Germans wouldn't hear. The next day they gave us water, to bathe, we got clothes, and headed towards Allendorf [One of the labor camps of the Buchenwald concentration camp]. We went for three days, they bombed Dresden horribly. They let us out there, so we could do a little 'business', at least. One German who happened to be passing, asked me, naturally in German, what are you? a boy or a girl? I said girl. He shook his head and said, 'Gott, how you look!' So you can't say that every German was rotten.

From June to the middle of August, I was in Auschwitz. When we ended up in Allendorf, we laid down on the ground and kissed it. There were little flowers growing in the camp. Everybody got one bunk, the beds were three high. We got a little blanket, a sack of hay. It wasn't like this in Auschwitz, where we had to sleep sitting on the ground. We couldn't have even laid down. In Allendorf, life was more humane. There were a thousand of us. Seven hundred Hungarians from Hungary, there were about 300 of us from 'Felvidek' ['oberland' in German – literally 'the upperlands'; today, an area in Slovakia on the Hungarian border that was annexed to the First Czechoslovakian Republic by the Trianon Treaty at Versailles, then re-annexed by Hungary in 1938 by the First Vienna Decision.] I always signed up to work everywhere, I ended up in the kitchen. Of

course, my knowledge of German helped me. I worked in the kitchen to the end of our time in the lager.

One supervisor woman, Margaret, was especially cruel. We named her ‘pearl hen’. If she approached, we said pearl hen is coming, because we couldn’t say Margaret is coming. Once she heard it, and they told her what the word meant. We got our pearl hen. She really beat us with a rubber club and her hands, then locked us in the cellar for I don’t know how many days, of course, we got no food. They really beat me on two occasions there.

I didn’t have to work in the munitions factory. The factory was four or five kilometers [2-3 miles] from our quarters. I thought that everything was underground, since the big trees covered everything, they nearly barricaded the camp in along with the factory. I was in the factory one time, when my sister got sick. I saw what work they did there. In the Allendorf shell factory, they filled bombs. The work was very difficult. They left in the morning, got a half liter of milk. They drilled out the bombs, put in the wicks and the detonator. It looks like the work was very detrimental to your health, that’s why they gave you milk, too. We stayed in Allendorf until March. Allendorf belonged to Buchenwald. At the end of March, they evacuated us. We marched day and night, for I don’t know how many days. The Germans with us, but they didn’t shoot us. They were going to Berlin, we didn’t know where we were going. The locked us in a pen where there were sheep grazing. They wanted to burn us up with the pen. The SS who were with us in the camp didn’t do this. Adolf Hupka was his name, he didn’t burn us up. He was a decent person. Whatever he could, he did for us. He was a decent person. The female supervisors in the camp were very horrible. But he was decent, very decent. He said to us, ‘Tomorrow you will be free, but I don’t know what will happen to us.’ The next day we started off again, they took the death-head insignia off their caps and coats. Then we spread out in a forest, I think it was the Black Forest.

We just kept fleeing. A Pole took us in to his manor, and told us to be quiet. The manor was full of tanks and German soldiers. We thought we’d fallen into a nice little trap. There were probably twenty of us, the rest had fallen behind. That night he brought us milk, we calmed down a bit from that. All at once a black tank was stopped in front of us. They were blacks. Americans. Soldiers, officers, they even spoke Hungarian. They said, ‘Stay here. We’ll come back for you at night’. And they came back for us, took us into a village, and housed us in a school there. The Germans were all around us, there was hay and lice, fleas everywhere, but we were so glad. We left again a week later. We ate tinned food, that the Americans brought. The local Germans all hid. The mayor only came to us a week later. The American officer threatened to hang him if he didn’t find us places to stay. There were about thirty of us. He put fifteen in one group and fifteen in another place. After this the mayor personally came and wrote down what we needed. They gave us a lot too. They always filled a huge box with food, we didn’t suffer from hunger again, they took care of us.

After the war

Unfortunately, I got sick, too. I immediately ate my fill, when we were liberated. The first thing I did was make poppy seed dumplings. We’d found some poppy seeds and flour in the villa. I was on my back for a month in the American hospital. If there hadn’t been help, I wouldn’t have come home. My little sister and three girlfriends didn’t get sick, but I really ate my fill of poppy seed dumplings.

In 1987, they arranged a reunion for those who were in Allendorf. We stayed in a beautiful hotel. When we worked in Allendorf, we never got to see the village, because we were outside of it. It was

a little village originally, while today it has become a city. The Germans awaited us with a smorgasbord. They served kosher and non-kosher dishes separately. There were cheeses, fried potatoes, all kinds of fish, that's what the kosher people ate. For us, they served us whatever we wanted. About eight hundred of us gathered there, because everyone brought a partner. There were about four hundred of us and four hundred were kosher. They paid for the trip, and paid for everything. We went by car, and my daughter and son-in-law came, too. On the way there, we slept at the home of one of my girlfriend's from Frankfurt, then we just went to Allendorf. Unfortunately, I didn't recognize my co-prisoners, because everybody was old. However, a few recognized me. They said, 'You're Rozi from the kitchen.'

I was together with our girlfriends the whole way. We went to Kassel, to the American military headquarters, so that we could get home. My girlfriends wanted to go to America since they had nothing to go back to. We still hoped that mother or our siblings would come back. We wanted to go home. There were a thousand of us, three hundred of which were North Hungarians, the others Hungarians. The Hungarians stayed, they took us, the North Hungarians home. We went by truck all the way to Pilsen. In Pilsen, they handed us over to the Russians. It was a horrible experience, what the Russians did to us, they took everything away, that we'd brought from there, and they raped some of us.

We got to Galanta, where they took us out to the Galanta road. A Kirghizstani was shooting there. We had gotten Italian boots from the Americans. The Kirghizstani put down his weapon, and I kicked him. As he fell, the others threw his rifle away, and we yelled for help. We were afraid that his partners would shoot us. He went away to the Castle, because that's where the headquarters were then, and two Russians and a Galanta resident came. Who knows what he did, because there in front of us, they shot the Kirghizstani soldier. Then they took us to Ony road, about ten of us. My sister Hana, Edit Rozsa, Szidi, the three Adler girls and some others. Today there are only a few of us remaining, who came back. Now there are only seven of us here and there in the Galanta area.

My girlfriend, Szidi Stein, her father was already at home. Mister Stein had a room and we lived there, the four of us – Edit Rozsa, Hana, Szidi and I. When we got back to Galanta, we found out that our father was living in Pest. Hana stayed in Galanta by herself and only I went to Pest to find Father. I'd never been to a big city in my life, not even to Pozsony, but I made the trip anyway with the Galanta boys. They told us to watch out for the Russians, 'Don't let them do anything!' That's what they said when they dropped me off. I was lucky that I met two Galanta girls. I knew they lived in Pest. I asked them whether they'd seen my father or not. Just as they told me, he was living in Bab street. We went there, to that street, and Father had just moved away. They took me back to Nyar street, to a school where the prisoners who returned from the lagers were housed. In the evening, I saw my father come out of a building on the other side of the street. He started crying, so did I. He was going everyday to the train station to see who came home. He didn't know anything about anyone [of us].

I went back to Galanta, for Hana. We didn't want to stay in Pest in Father's apartment because there were so many bedbugs there, and we couldn't get used to Pest [Budapest] anyway. That's how father got back to Galanta. We got a room next to the Steins, on Main street, where the Jednota department store is today. There was a furniture store out front, and we lived there. I don't remember who we rented from. None of the family belongings were left, we don't know who has them or where they are. We found a pair of prayer books in the attic that still have. The other

Galantans didn't get anything back either, just maybe those who went into hiding.

Very few [Galantans] survived the Holocaust. We were deported from Galanta in 1944. We didn't have any relatives living in Galanta, anyway. There were nine of us altogether: the brothers and sisters, and Mother, and Father. Of the nine, three came home: Father, my younger sister and I. The others all remained there. The distant family relatives lived in Subcarpathia. The grandmothers, the cousins, the aunts, the uncles were all taken away from there. All we know is that a few cousins returned, but they left for Palestine. Two cousins from Dombo stayed, Malka and Franto Joskovits. Malka and Franto were also in the camps, in forced labor, but I don't remember what they told us about it. My mother and theirs were sisters.

The non-Jewish neighbors took pity on us when we returned. You could write to them about [from] Auschwitz, but only that we were healthy. We could only write, 'I'm fine and the whole family is fine', those were the regulations. I wrote a letter to Felsoszeli, to one of our old neighbors. The neighbors got the letter, but I didn't put it away, it got misplaced, though they gave it to me after the war. The neighbors believed what I wrote, since my name was signed on it.

In Galanta, we ate in a communal kitchen [cafeteria]. The cook, Elemer Eckstein left for Palestine. We went there to eat. They demolished the kitchen since then, it was also on Main street. They opened another kitchen later in the courtyard of Rabbi Buxbaum. Rabbi Buxbaum was a victim of the Holocaust. I worked as an assistant cook there. Two of us cooked, but we went to help the work brigade also. The kitchen was maintained by the Joint [Joint (American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee)][12], they funded it. We even got clothes there. The head cook, Mrs. Wollner, Sarika [from Sarolta], grabbed the goose liver and took it home, but I didn't let her. One time, a five liter jar full of goose liver. She wanted to take it, but it fell and the jar broke. I said, 'Thank god, we're going to eat.' I never took food home, I gave it all to the young men and women. Mrs. Wollner was jealous of me, because the boarders yelled that I should cook and serve, because I gave them more generous portions. They really loved me, since I gave everyone the same sized portions. I think it was rather, that I didn't look anyone in the eye, so I couldn't even make distinctions among them. Many came there to eat. The kitchen was still working in 1946. I think it closed in 1947.

Following the war, my father got married. Fina Messinger was the sadchen for Father and his new wife. Father's new bride-to-be, Sara Schiffer, lived in Pest with her siblings. She was from an orthodox Jewish family in Satoraljaujhely. Since one of her older brothers had taken a non-Jewish wife before the war, they expelled him from the family.

I don't even know where the wedding was held. I was with my father's sister at the time, with Etel in Prague. I lived for a time with Father's new family, up until I got married. I didn't like them at first, so I didn't call her Mother, but rather Aunt Sari. Later, my children also called her Aunt Sari and that was very painful for her. When my father died, my husband said, 'Sarika you are a guest at our house every Saturday.' She appreciated this very much and came every Saturday for lunch.

She had a sister, who didn't have a family. She lived in Budapest, so Sari moved in with her. I often went to visit them on 4 Angyal Street. On every occasion, she was so glad. I brought a lot of presents with me. After her sister died, I cleaned house for her. While I was there, we would go down to the Pava Street Jewish kitchen to eat. In our free time, we usually took walks, went to the cinema or theater. I saw the play 'Fiddler on the Roof' for the first time in Budapest, and the film as well. Bessenyei played the lead role in the play, while on the screen, it was played by the American

actor, Smulanski.

When I became a widow, I sometimes celebrated the holidays at Sarika's. We went to the Dohany Street synagogue. I went on foot from Angyal Street all the way to Dohany Street, not by streetcar.

Sarika died about ten years ago. She spent the last days of her life in the hospital, as she had cancer. Sarika's American niece and I were at her side. Sunday I had gone home to Galanta, but by that evening the telephone rang, Sarika was dead. That week I went back to Pest to one of my girlfriend's house and we arranged the burial. The Neolog community [Neolog Jewry] 13 was based in Wesselenyi street. Rabbi Deutsch buried her, I paid him to recite the Kaddish for a year.

After the war there were two shochetim living in Galanta, Krakauer and Rabbi Katz. My father stopped eating kosher in 1958, that is, he had an argument with the rabbi. He lived with Rabbi Katz in one apartment at the time, the rabbi had to split up his apartment [share-renting] 14, and if my father hadn't occupied it, they would have put a person there who raised pigs. There was no way the Galanta Jews would have liked to have pigs raised in the synagogue courtyard. So, my father ended up there. Katz didn't have children, so he was left with only one room and a kitchen. My father and his second wife likewise got one room and a kitchen. Rabbi Katz was an irascible, earth-bound person, may he rest in peace. The misunderstandings intensified until the end when Rabbi Katz did something which, according to the spirit of Jewish law, he shouldn't have. He refused to slaughter a duck my father had brought him to slaughter. My father grabbed the duck and slaughtered it in front of him. After that it was treyf. Five years later, when my father died, Rabbi Katz himself got over it, and he gave such a beautiful speech, as if nothing had ever happened between them.

My father was buried in Galanta in 1963 with Orthodox rites. Rabbi Katz said the funeral speech, but he didn't go himself into the cemetery, he just stayed in the vestibule. Rabbi Katz was a kohen. Two Jews were buried that day in Galanta, this had only happened once since the war. The other person who died was Mr. Blum. My father was buried in the morning, Mr. Blum that afternoon. The weather was horribly hot.

To this day they still don't allow women to step near the grave when they bury people in Galanta.[proscribed by the Galanta Jewish Orthodox community]. In the front of the vestibule, the deceased is washed, anointed with eggs and kosher wine, then dressed. The men do the men, and the women do the women. I only dressed the dead once, Mrs. Fleischmann. Sadly, there are almost no Jewish women in Galanta who would do this anymore. The grave is lined with planks, that way no nails are used. The deceased, wrapped in a white sheet is put in the ground. A man gets down in the grave, beside the dead person to wipe their face. Their eyes and mouth are covered with pieces of pottery and a palm frond is placed in their right hand. Finally, the boards are placed over top and are covered in dirt.

After my father's funeral, we sat shivah for seven days straight. Many came over in the evening to pray with us. Even today, if it is Father's Yahrzeit, the anniversary of his death, I light a candle. As I am a woman, I cannot pray a Kaddish for him. For Jews, women are queens only at home.

I married Hermann Deutsch in 1947. My husband was born on June 7, 1905 in Zsigard. His mother tongue is Hungarian. He finished four Civils [Civil School] 15. He went to a yeshivah also, here in Galanta, with Rabbi Buxbaum and Duschinski.

I met him in the Jewish kitchen, where I was working as an assistant cook. He also went there to eat. We got to know each other at that time, even though he was from Galanta, too. There was a twenty-four year age difference between us. Before the war, he went around on a beautiful bicycle. I always wanted to borrow it, so I asked him, ‘Mister, please loan me your bike!’. Of course, he never did. He was a bachelor.

He came home after the war, somehow we got together. He called me over many times, when he already had his own jewelry business and he had to leave on business with his partner Kalisch, to stay the night. In the morning, I opened the shop. He had a assistant watchmaker working there, but I also helped out. Sometimes he’d ask me to bake this or fry that. I did it. Slowly, we fell in love. We were married in Prague. The civil ceremony was here in Galanta on December 6, 1947, on St. Nicholas Day. The religious wedding we had in Prague, on December 28, 1947. My husband was Jewish, and that was very important to me. We had the wedding in Prague because my Aunt Etus and Uncle Nachman lived there then.

In Prague, my husband-to-be stayed in the Paris Hotel, and until our wedding, I stayed with my aunt. Directly before the wedding, I mean before the ceremony, my aunt took me to the mikveh. The mikveh wasn’t far from the Vltava. First I washed in a tub, then I had to dunk under the water. They told me how to do it. They didn’t cut off my hair, and I’ve never worn a wig. I covered my head, and still do when I go to the prayer house. I only went to a mikveh a couple times in Galanta. The mikveh was open here in Galanta until they tore it down in the 1960s.

My husband borrowed my wedding dress from an acquaintance of his. The veil and bouquet I got as a present. My aunt dressed me before the wedding. In that Prague synagogue, where there is a Jewish clock [Jewish Town Hall on Maiselova Street has a clock with Hebrew letters which moves counter-clockwise], that’s where the wedding was. The orthodox rabbi Rappaport married us. The groom was waiting already under the chuppah. My Aunt Ethel and my father’s wife, that is, my step-mother wrapped me in their arms and led me under the chuppah. My father and Uncle Nachman stood on either side of my husband.. At the end of the ceremony, my husband broke glasses. After the ceremony, we went to Aunt Etus’s house, where a wedding banquet followed. Quite a lot of people came. My best girlfriend, Szidi was there with her husband. They set seven tables. After the wedding, I stayed in the Paris Hotel with my husband. We were in Prague for a week. In the beginning, I called my husband Hermann, but when the children were born, then he became ‘Dad’. In front of the grandchildren, I called him ‘Papa’.

My husband worked in the munitions factory during the Holocaust which belonged to Buchenwald. After he got home, he stayed alone. None of his relatives came home for him, though he had two sisters, and they had children, too.

When I got married, like newlyweds we bought double of every kitchen utensil. My husband and I agreed to keep a kosher household, in spite of the fact that my husband had already eaten treyf, but I hadn’t. I kept kosher until 1960. I don’t remember on what occasion I ate treyf the first time. I was at work, I ate in the company kitchen, so it was impossible to follow the obligations of a kosher kitchen there. I don’t even have separate dishes for Pesach, anymore. On Pesach, I don’t consume leavened bread, flour and yeast either, I just eat matzah for eight days. My menu at that time usually consists of blintzes, various vegetables and meat. Nowadays in Galanta, I only know two people who keep kosher, Mrs. Muller and Mrs. Lowinger.

Almost all of our friends emigrated by 1948. Most of them went to Palestine. They went home. I'm not even sure there was a Palestine then. Everybody left. My husband and I also got ready to leave, but I stayed, pregnant. Pali was born in 1949. Since he had already started to sprout a little, we couldn't leave. So we stayed here, but we really would have liked to leave. We even packed for it, I labeled the crates. In the end, we stayed anyway. That was really painful for me, I would have gone.

We were very glad about the formation of the Israeli state in 1948. We got together and talked about it, and were glad about it. Even today, if we sing the Israeli anthem [Hatikvah] 16, my tears start gushing. We also sing it, if there's an occasion calls for it, for example in the prayer house, for the unveiling of memorials...etc.

My husband was the general manager of a pharmacy for thirty years. He worked in one place all the way to his retirement. I worked with him, but it wasn't long before the regulation came out, that husband and wife couldn't work together in the same place. So I looked for another position. I found one in the service industry, as a manager, then I worked in another business, likewise as a general manager. I retired to a reduced pension quite early for health reasons, because of my spine.

After we returned [from the war], it was hard to make heads nor tails of politics, in the new system. Communism didn't sit well with me. That's probably why I kept my religion, because the Communist system didn't appreciate such activities. The Communists took power in 1948 and by the early 1950s, we felt it. They searched our house more than once. They just came in with a paper, 'Uh... we're searching your house.'. My husband and Kalisch had a jewelry store, so they thought, I don't know, we're so rich. During these house searches, they would turn everything over starting with the cellar, and we had kids by then. They even searched the children's beds so there wasn't any gold or something hidden away.

It was very displeasing for my husband. He said, when the Slansky Trial [Slansky Trial] 17 was going on, that it wasn't Slansky speaking, it was doll. It's possible that Slansky just spit in some [Communist] party member's face. They turned my husband in for saying those words. True, he was very lucky that his good friends overturned the letter reporting him. If they hadn't, he would have sat [in jail] for a good couple years. They repeated the house searches a good couple more times. That's when we felt there really is anti-Semitism. We heard on the radio about those Russian doctors, Jewish doctors [Doctor's Plot] 18 , in Romania and Bulgaria also, it was just Jews who were persecuted. We were really sorry then that we didn't leave for Israel. We were really scared then, that they would put us in prison. I was scared that they would lock us up innocently, because they locked up a lot of people like that. It was enough to just say somebody was a Zionist, and they were locked up. Nobody among our immediate friends and relatives were locked up then. Jancsi [from Janos – John] Kalisch, however, was locked up, he was put away for five or six years. They imprisoned him because he wanted to go to Israel on an airplane.

I only took part in the Socialist holidays at work as much as I had to. I was a member of the union, it was obligatory, but I didn't join the Communist Party. In 1968, we just worked.[Prague Spring] 19. We were glad about what happened, however both our children were in the hospital in Pozsony [Bratislava] at the time. We thought a lot about leaving [emigrating] then, but my husband was afraid. He didn't want to depart for Germany, that is to say, he didn't want to live with the

Germans. We could have gone to America or Israel, but he said he was too old to start life over. I think we made a mistake then, that we stayed here. After 1968, a lot of people left Galanta.

We have three children, two sons and a daughter. Pali [diminutive of Pal –Paul] was born January 14, 1949 in the Lutheran hospital in Pozsony. I was sick, I spent almost a year in the hospital. My daughter Zsuzsi Deutsch, now Mrs. Schenk, likewise, was born in Pozsony on October 11, 1950 in the Jewish hospital. The last, my third child, Gyuri [from Gyorgy – George] here was born January 3, 1954 in Galanta. They all have Jewish names: Pali is Jehude – after his grandfather; Gyuri is Abraham; Zsuzsi is named Malka after my mother.

Pavol, whom we call just Pali at home, got married after his studies. It was a Jewish wedding. They lived in Ersekujvar. He was an employee of the Ogyalla Research Institute, and his wife was working in Szemerce as a teacher. They had a nice life. His wife died relatively young, and suddenly, at the age of fifty-one. They had two children, a daughter and a son. Renata, their daughter got married in 2000, her husband's name is Steiner. The ceremony was held in the courtyard of the Gyor synagogue. They had two sons, David and Daniel. My granddaughter didn't agree to have them circumcised, even though the Budapest rabbi came to do it. My grandson Peter married a girl of Russian origin, whose mother is supposedly Jewish. The wedding wasn't held according to Jewish tradition. They recently had their first daughter, Alzbeta.

My daughter Zsuzsi's husband, Ladislav Schenk is the descendent of a Jewish family from Dunaszerdahely. Their wedding was in 1969 or 1970. Rabbi Katz married them under the chuppah. My daughter didn't go to a mikveh, since she was already pregnant at the time. My son-in-law's mother and I escorted her under the chuppah. The groom was escorted by my husband and Grandpa Rujder, as his father was no longer living. The reception was arranged in the Dunaszerdahely prayerhouse courtyard. There were Gypsy musicians. The food was kosher, brought straight from Budapest. Every Jew in Dunaszerdahely was at the banquet. They had two daughters, Alica and Ingrid. The whole family emigrated to Israel later, to Netanya.

My son Juraj, nicknamed Gyuri, married a non-Jewish girl from Postyen. They had two families [children – sic], David and Estera. The marriage wasn't fortunate, because they divorced. His wife and children consider themselves Jehovah's witnesses. My grandchildren still come out to visit me. Estera has been married three years already, to a Kosovo Albanian boy, and David married not long ago. I asked him if his wife was aware that his grandmother is Jewish. He said yes. My grandchildren know I'm Jewish, they respect me and love me, like any other grandmother.

Concerning religion, my husband knew everything perfectly. He insisted on traditions. He insisted that my daughter marry a Jew and that my son take a Jewish wife. My third son didn't take a Jewish wife, true his wife wanted to convert, but my husband was already sick, he said it wasn't necessary. When my son Pali had a child, that is, he didn't allow his grandson to be circumcised, because his mother was a teacher who was scared when they put him in a nursery school, they would notice, and could kick him out. When the child turned sixteen years old, he had himself circumcised and had a bar mitzvah.

We went to the cinema and theater a lot, in Pest as well as in Pozsony. We didn't take the children, but went together by ourselves or with friends. We travelled by train, we didn't have a car. We went to cafes, too. Whether or not our friends were Jewish didn't matter. Dr. Neumann, Rozenzweig the engineer, Jozsi Ferencz, Kohan…they were all really good friends of ours. Neither Jozsi Ferenc,

nor Vrabec, nor Kohan were Jewish, but they were still really good friends. Every Saturday night and Sunday night we had card parties, every week we got together. If it was at our house, then we had black coffee, sandwiches and sweets. Everybody smoked, but they didn't go to the pub, they only visited houses. My husband was a big soccer fan. He went to the Galanta matches and Pozsony matches, too. He took the boys with him.

In the summers, we vacationed in Luhacovice. While the children were small, my father also came with me. My husband came out on the weekends, so he was together with us on Saturday and Sunday. He rarely took a vacation. We took walks, had conversations. Every year we went on summer vacation. I've been to Karlovy Vary [Karlsbad] 20 for problems with my gall bladder, as well as Bartfa for treatments. My husband had a heart attack, so every year for more than ten years we went to the spa in Podebrady.

We also went to company and union resorts [resort hotels/hostels for employee or member use]. We went to Balaton, and I always got my entrance pass to Karlovy Vary from the union. We first were awarded an travel permit abroad in 1977. My husband got sick right then and died in that year. Originally, we had planned to go to Germany to visit our friends. Our old friends from Galanta, Dr. Fischer's family and Jancsi Kalisch didn't let me stay home. They'd left in 1968. The Fischers weren't orthodox Jews. Jancsi was. I had gone to school with Kitti Fischer since childhood, she was a really good friend of mine. She said to me, 'Rozsi, if you can arrange it, I'll pay for the airline ticket, if you'd like to go to Israel, to visit Hana. At that time, I hadn't seen my sister for thirty-two years. When I got back to Galanta, I started making the arrangements. They said, if someone pays for the ticket, then I'll get my travel permit. And in 1978, I got it. I travelled to Israel in April and stayed there for six weeks. That was a big thing then, because they still weren't allowing such visits. I had to submit the application to the President of the Republic [of Czechoslovakia], he gave me an exception for permission to travel. He wrote on it, that I had been in a lager and I hadn't seen my sister in thirty-two years. It's possible that he personally signed it, or someone from his office signed it in his name, but the fact is, I got the travel permit.

I remember the 1967 Israeli war very well. We were constantly sitting in front of the television, listening to the news. We were proud that they had such a army at their disposal, and that they were able to conquer so many Arabs. There were even Galantans who had close relatives who lost their lives in the war.

For myself, I had a few opportunities to go to Israel, first in 1978, then again only after the Velvet Revolution [Velvet Revolution] 21 did I get to go there. After that I went almost every year. I've been to Netanya, Jerusalem at my friends', I went to Kirjat-Atta where one of my Romanian cousins lives. I went to a lot of places.

I find Israel to be a fascinating country. When I first went, it surprised me how small it is. A couple years later, I hardly recognized Netanya, it had been built up so much. There were a lot of Russians on the streets, everyone spoke Russian, if I was walking, I thought I was in Moscow. I liked everything there, from a visitor's point of view everything was pretty. Maybe if I would live there, I wouldn't find everything so pretty.

After the political change in 1989, when they opened up the eastern block countries, there was no major change in my life. The only way the events affected me was that we could go to Vienna freely. Of course, I had already been to the west. I saw the jewelry stores there and everything that

many were seeing for the first time. It wasn't new to me, I had been to Germany and Israel, too.

My son, Gyuri escaped to Germany in the 1970s, and they had let me visit him. 1983, 1984, 1985… Every year I went out to see him, and even stayed for up to three months. My son is a masseur. I lived with him in Munich. I worked there too. I did needlework for a German seamstress, there who paid me very well for my work. I bought this and that, and sold it at home. This little side income worked out very well with my pension.

My life hardly changed after the Velvet Revolution. I've got quite a respectable pension. I get 400 Euros from the Germans quarterly, since I worked in the Allendorf munitions factory. I'm not reliant on anyone, my children either. I still take care of myself.

I'm an active member of the Jewish community. I'm part of the leadership, I take part in the meetings, we discuss everything. The president of the Galanta religious community at present is Bela Fahn. The present president, Fahn is a different kind of person than the last president, Adolf Schultz. He was much older than Fahn is. Bela Fahn informs us about everything, discusses things with us. Schultz in his time, just quickly rushed through what he had to say, and acted according to his own ideas.

I'm now going to the prayer house. There's a reception room there, where we celebrate weddings and birthdays. Every year we celebrate the Zajin Adar holiday. We set the table, serve cakes and something to drink. In the evening, we have a fish dinner. The Pozsony rabbi, Baruch Myers is usually present at these times, he gives us a holiday speech. The Jewish families from the Galanta area get together.

I never hide my Jewish origins. Once I went to a bath, and someone wanted to tell a Jewish joke. First they said that they hoped there weren't Jewish people among us. I said there weren't any, just one, that would be me. I don't hide that I'm Jewish.

In the last three years, the Slovakian Jewish Community Central Organization have taken over half my expenses for drug prescriptions. On the basis of a medical prescription, there's a social worker, who is paid by the town. Through the Claims Conference, I received 4500 Euros for persecution during the Holocaust.

During the latest census, I considered myself of Slovakian Nationality. I live here, so I consider myself Slovakian. At the same time, I haven't given up my Jewish religion. That's one hundred percent.

Glossary

1 Subcarpathia (also known as Ruthenia, Zakarpatie): Region situated on the border of the Carpathian Mountains with the Middle Danube lowland. The regional capitals are Uzhhorod, Berehovo, Mukachevo, Khust. It belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy until World War I; and the Saint-Germain convention declared its annexation to Czechoslovakia in 1919. It is impossible to give exact historical statistics of the language and ethnic groups living in this geographical unit: the largest groups in the interwar period were Hungarians, Rusyns, Russians, Ukrainians, Czech and Slovaks. In addition there was also a considerable Jewish and Gypsy population. In accordance with the first Vienna Decision of 1938, the area of Subcarpathia mainly inhabited by Hungarians

was ceded to Hungary. The rest of the region was proclaimed a new state called Carpathian Ukraine in 1939, with Khust as its capital, but it only existed for four and a half months, and was occupied by Hungary in March 1939. Subcarpathia was taken over by Soviet troops and local guerrillas in 1944. In 1945, Czechoslovakia ceded the area to the USSR and it gained the name Carpatho-Ukraine. The region became part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1945. When Ukraine became independent in 1991, the region became an administrative region under the name of Transcarpathia.

2 The First Czechoslovak Republic (1918-1938)

After the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy following World War I, the union of 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.

3 Military in the Austro-Hungarian Empire

From the Compromise of 1867, the armies of the Empire (Kaiser und Kundlich Armee - the Imperial And Royal Army), were subordinated to the common Ministry of War. The two parts of the country had separate armies: Austria had the Landwehr (Imperial Army) and Hungary had the National Guard (Hungarian Royal National Guard). Many political conflicts arose during this period of ‘dualism’, concerning mutual payment and control of these armies, even to the degree that officers were required to command in the language of the majority of his troops.

4 Theresienstadt

A ghetto in the Czech Republic, run by the SS. Jews were transferred from there to various extermination camps. The Nazis, who presented Theresienstadt as a ‘model Jewish settlement’, used it to camouflage the extermination of European Jews. Czech gendarmes served as ghetto guards, and with their help the Jews were able to maintain contact with the outside world. Although education was prohibited, regular classes were held, clandestinely. Thanks to the large number of artists, writers, and scholars in the ghetto, there was an intensive program of cultural activities. At the end of 1943, when word spread of what was happening in the Nazi camps, the Germans decided to allow an International Red Cross investigation committee to visit Theresienstadt. In preparation, more prisoners were deported to Auschwitz, in order to reduce congestion in the ghetto. Dummy stores, a café, a bank, kindergartens, a school, and flower gardens were put up to deceive the committee.

5 February 1948

Communist take-over in Czechoslovakia. The 'people's domocracy' became one of the Soviet satelites in Eastern Europe. The state aparatus was centralized under the leadership of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (KSC). In the economy, private ovnership was banned and submitted to central planning. The state took control of the educational system, too. Political opposition and dissident elements were persecuted.

6 1989 Political changes

A description, rather than name for the surprising events following the summer of 1989, when Hungarian border guards began allowing East German families vacationing in Hungary to cross into Austria, and escape to the West. After the symbolic reburial of Imre Nagy, the Hungarian parliament quietly announced its rejection of communism and transformation to a social democracy. The confused internal struggle among Soviet satellite nations which ensued, eventually led to the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the reorganization of Eastern Europe. The Soviets peacefully withdrew their military in 1990.

7 First Vienna Decision

On November 2, 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 (Uzhhorod) and Munkacs (Mukachevo), all in all 11,927 square kilometer of land, and a population of 1.6 million people became part of Hungary.

8 Forced Labor

Under the 1939 II. Law 230, those deemed unfit for military service were required to complete 'public interest work service'. After the implementation of the second anti-Jewish law within the military, the military arranged 'special work battalions' for those Jews, who were not called up for armed service. With the entry into northern Transylvania (August 1940), those of Jewish origin who had begun, and were now finishing, their military service were directed to the work battalions. The 2870/1941 HM order unified the arrangement, saying that the Jews are to fulfill military obligations in the support units of the national guard. In the summer of 1942, thousands of Jews were recruited to labor battalions with the Hungarian troops going to the Soviet front. Some 50,000 in labor battalions went with the Second Hungarian Army to the Eastern Front – of these, only 6-7000 returned.

9 Jewish Laws in Hungary

The first of these anti-Jewish laws was passed in 1938, restricting the number of Jews in liberal professions, administration, and in commercial and industrial enterprises to 20 percent. The second anti-Jewish Law, passed in 1939, defined the term "Jew" on racial grounds, and came to include some 100,000 Christians (apostates or their children). It also reduced the number of Jews in economic activity, fixing it at 6 percent. Jews were not allowed to be editors, chief-editors, theater-directors, artistic leaders or stage directors. The Numerus Clausus was introduced again, prohibiting Jews from public jobs and restricting their political rights. As a result of these laws, 250,000 Hungarian Jews were locked out of their sources of livelihood. The third anti-Jewish Law,

passed in 1941, defined the term “Jew” on more radical racial principles. Based on the Nuremberg laws, it prohibited inter-racial marriage. In 1941, the Anti-Jewish Laws were extended to North-Transylvania. A year later, the Israelite religion was deleted from the official religions subsidized by the state. After the German occupation in 1944, a series of decrees was passed: all Jews were required to relinquish any telephone or radio in their possession to the authorities; all Jews were required to wear a yellow star; and non-Jews could not be employed in Jewish households. From April 1944 Jewish property was confiscated, Jews were barred from all intellectual jobs and employment by any financial institutions, and Jewish shops were closed down.

10 Jewish Codex

In 1941, the Slovak government passed a decree on the legal status of Jews, which has become known as the Jewish Codex. The decree initiated a racial approach to the question of the rights of Jews in Slovakia forcing to the background an approach based on religion. All those who had at least three Jewish grandparents were considered Jewish, and those who had two Jewish grandparents, those who married a Jew, or those born from a mixed marriage, or those born out of wedlock where one of the parties was Jewish, were all considered half Jews. The Jewish Codex called for the complete Aryanization of Jewish property, as well as the economic, political and public exclusion of Jews from society.

11 Constable

A member of the Hungarian Royal Constabulary, responsible for keeping order in rural areas, this was a militarily organized national police, subordinated to both, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defense. The body was created in 1881 to replace the previously eliminated county and estate gendarmerie (pandours), with the legal authority to insure the security of cities. Constabularies were deployed at every county seat and mining area. The municipal cities generally had their own law enforcement bodies – the police. The constables had the right to cross into police jurisdiction during the course of special investigations. Preservatory governing structure didn’t conform (the outmoded principles working in the strict hierarchy) to the social and economic changes happening in the country. Conflicts with working-class and agrarian movements, and national organizations turned more and more into outright bloody transgressions. Residents only saw the constabulary as an apparatus for consolidation of conservative power. After putting down the Hungarian Soviet Republic, the Christian establishment in the formidable and anti-Semitically biased forces came across a coercive force able to check the growing social movements caused by the unresolved land question. Aside from this, at the time of elections – since villages had public voting – they actively took steps against the opposition candidates and supporters. In 1944, the Constabulary directed the collection of rural Jews into ghettos and their deportation. After the suspension of deportations (June 6, 1944), the arrow cross sympathetic interior apparatus Constabulary forces were called to Budapest to attempt a coup. The body was disbanded in 1945, and the new democratic police took over.

12 Joint (American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee)

The Joint was formed in 1914 with the fusion of three American Jewish committees of assistance, which were alarmed by the suffering of Jews during WWI. In late 1944, the Joint entered Europe’s liberated areas and organized a massive relief operation. It provided food for Jewish survivors all

over Europe, it supplied clothing, books and school supplies for children. It supported cultural amenities and brought religious supplies for the Jewish communities. The Joint also operated DP camps, in which it organized retraining programs to help people learn trades that would enable them to earn a living, while its cultural and religious activities helped re-establish Jewish life. The Joint was also closely involved in helping Jews to emigrate from Europe and from Muslim countries. The Joint was expelled from East Central Europe for decades during the Cold War and it has only come back to many of these countries after the fall of communism. Today the Joint provides social welfare programs for elderly Holocaust survivors and encourages Jewish renewal and communal development.

13 Neolog Jewry

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

14 Share-renting

One of the idiosyncrasies of housing after the war (based on the Soviet model) where numbers of families were placed together in the larger apartments (of those owners killed, deported or interned abroad in the war). Each family was given one bedroom, while the kitchen and other rooms were used commonly. Sometimes, the original owner had families placed in their homes on the grounds that they weren't 'entitled' to such a large apartment. Other times, owners 'took in' share renters of their choosing before the council sent strangers into their homes.

15 Civil school

(Sometimes called middle school) This type of school was created in 1868. Originally it was intended to be a secondary school, but in its finally established 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.

16 Hatikvah

Anthem of the Zionist movement, and national anthem of the State of Israel. The word 'ha-tikvah' means 'the hope'. The anthem was written by Naftali Herz Imber (1856-1909), who moved to Palestine from Galicia in 1882. The melody was arranged by Samuel Cohen, an immigrant from Moldavia, from a musical theme of Smetana's Moldau (Vltava), which is based on an Eastern European folk song.

17 Slansky Trial

Communist show trial named after its most prominent victim, Rudolf Slansky. It was the most spectacular among show trials against communists with a wartime connection with the West, veterans of the Spanish Civil War, Jews, and Slovak ‘bourgeois nationalists’. In November 1952 Slansky and 13 other prominent communist personalities, 11 of whom were Jewish, including Slansky, were brought to trial. The trial was given great publicity; they were accused of being Trotskyite, Titoist, Zionist, bourgeois, nationalist traitors, and in the service of American imperialism. Slansky was executed, and many others were sentenced to death or to forced labor in prison camps.

18 Doctors’ Plot

An alleged conspiracy of a group of Moscow doctors to murder leading government and party officials. In January 1953, the Soviet press reported that nine doctors, six of whom were Jewish, had been arrested and confessed their guilt. As Stalin died in March 1953, the trial never took place. The official paper of the Party, the Pravda, later announced that the charges against the doctors were false and their confessions obtained by torture. This case was one of the worst anti-Semitic incidents during Stalin’s reign. In his secret speech at the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956 Khrushchev stated that Stalin wanted to use the Plot to purge the top Soviet leadership.

19 Prague Spring

Designates the liberalization period in communist ruled Czechoslovakia between 1967-1969. In 1967 Alexander Dubcek became the head of the Czech Communist Party and promoted ideas of ‘socialism with a human face', i.e. with more personal freedom and freedom of the press, and the rehabilitation of victims of Stalinism. In August 1968 Soviet troops, along with contingents from Poland, East Germany, Hungary and Bulgaria, occupied Prague and put an end to the reforms.

20 Karlsbad (Czech name

Karlovy Vary): The most famous Bohemian spa, named after Bohemian King Charles (Karel) IV, who allegedly found the springs during a hunting expedition in 1358. It was one of the most popular resorts among the royalty and aristocracy in Europe for centuries.

21 Velvet revolution

Also known as ‘November Events’, this term is used for the period between 17 November and 29 December 1989, that resulted in the downfall of the Czechoslovak communist regime. The Velvet Revolution started with student demonstrations, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the student demonstration against the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia. Brutal police intervention stirred up public unrest, mass demonstrations took place in Prague, Bratislava and other towns, and a general strike began on 27 November. The Civic Forum demanded the resignation of the communist government. Due to the general strike Prime Minister Ladislav Adamec was finally forced to hold talks with the Civic Forum and agreed to form a new coalition government. On 29 December democratic elections were held, and Vaclav Havel was elected President of

Czechoslovakia.