Magda Fazekas

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Magda Fazekas is a woman of average height with gray hair, a gentle look and a quiet voice. Since the middle of the 1990s she has lived at her daughter's place in Germany, but every year or second year she comes back to Marosvasarhely: she visits the family house they have there, she goes to the Jewish community with her elder daughter, and she visits the cemetery as well. I met her at a seder dinner; she immediately offered me to tell me about her life. In Marosvasarhely the family owns a large, storied house; she told me the story of the house as well. It is furnished with fine furniture inherited from the parents and brothers. Behind the house there is a nice grass-covered courtyard with a hedge.

My family background

My father's parents lived in Gyergyotolgyes [in Romanian Tulghes]. I was born in 1920, and I suppose that when I had reached the age when I could have asked questions, I don't know why, but I never did. I don't remember asking my father about his parents, because they were probably no longer alive. My father's father was called Paskel Struhl. My grandfather had a sawmill; he was trading with timber, that was his occupation. They lived in a wood region. In Gyergyoszarhegy, where we lived, people used to call my father Mr. Paskel. My father's name was Arnold Struhl, yet the villagers always called him Mr. Paskel. I don't know why they called him by the name Paskel, I really have no idea.

If I remember well, my father too had seven siblings; we were seven as well. In my childhood I was in Gyergyotolgyes twice, because two of my father's sisters still lived there then, but they never told us to go to the cemetery. Well, they should have shown me where the grandparents were buried. But it never came up.

I think my father, Arnold, was the eldest. One of his brothers was Uncle Bernad. Uncle Bernad Struhl was very religious, he was bearded. My father was bearded too, but his beard was not so long. In the time of the [Austro- Hungarian] monarchy Uncle Bernad moved to Debrecen. He was a merchant, but I don't know what kind, because I never went to Debrecen. I don't know his wife's name, but I know that she was Jewish. They had two children, Andor and Nelli. Uncle Bernad came back to Romania every year, but only he came, his family didn't. He spent some time with us and with his siblings who lived in Romania. He paid a visit, so to speak.

Nelli married a physician, and had a daughter. Andor graduated in law, but because of the anti-Jewish laws 1 he couldn't find a job in Hungary and went to France. He fled the country. Nelli, Uncle Bernad and his wife were deported [during WWII]. After he left Hungary, Andor joined the Foreign Legion in France. He got to Africa with the legion, and in Senegal he met the daughter of the governor of Senegal. They got married. His wife was called like his sister, Nelli. Their life is an interesting story, a romance.

My father had one more brother, who was called Aizik. Uncle Aizik must have had a tragic life, but we don't know anything about it. He disappeared. It never came to light under which circumstances. Presumably he had some sort of problem, a mental disorder, schizophrenia. Uncle Aizik was divorced, he had two children as well, but I don't know precisely where they lived. These are old stories from the time of my childhood. And they didn't talk about him, I don't know why not. His person was a taboo in our family.

He had a sister too called Cecilia, or Aunt Cecil. Aunt Cecil's husband was called Herman Hirsch. In Gyergyotolgyes they were considered a wealthy family, as they lived in a very beautiful, large house with a garden. I remember they had a huge fruit-garden and lots of currants. And I liked currants so much; even today I enjoy picking currants. Aunt Cecil had an extremely gentle character. They were a childless couple. Uncle Herman was a charming man. I remember having such a good time at their house.

Cecilia and her husband had a large shop in Gyergyotolgyes. The shop used to be within the family house. All of them [the siblings] had their own house. Cecilia had a nice and big family house. Comfort didn't exist at that time. For example no such thing like water pipes existed; at that time there weren't even artesian wells outdoors. There were only traditional wells, where one had to draw up the water from.

Another of my father's sisters was Etelka. Her husband was called Arnold Lobl. Etelka's family was also very well-off. They had two children, Hedi and Jeno. Hedike was four years younger than me, but we played a lot together. And I felt very-very good at their place too, because Aunt Etelka was a great cook, and we had delicious meals at hers, I remember that well. She was extremely thorough, the house was so clean, one couldn't even describe it, and she was very clever as well. Etelka was the opposite of Aunt Cecil, because Etelka was tall, and she wasn't fat at all, and Aunt Cecil was small and fat. Well, this is what you should know about the two sisters. Etelka's family was so wealthy that they bought Hedi a piano. I think nobody else had a piano in the village, only them. This was already in Romania, it must have happened in the 1930s, because I was around ten at the time.

My father had yet another sister, Aunt Lina, who lived in Brasso. Aunt Lina's husband was called Jeno Izrael. They were very rich people. Aunt Lina had been married before. She had divorced her

first husband, and got married for the second time to Uncle Jeno. They had two children, Edit and Laci [Laszlo], both are dead by now. Edit was the elder, Laci was the younger.

Aunt Lina visited us every year in Gyergyoszarhegy. I also know that my father didn't go with her [when she went to the cemetery]; Aunt Lina went alone to see the grave of her parents. And he didn't mention them; I don't remember him talking about his parents. I couldn't even tell you what my grandmother's name was. It might sound strange, but that's how it is. [Editor's note: Centropa managed to find out the names from various family documents.]

The husband of Aunt Roza was called Moric Majer. They had three children: Jeno Majer, Marci [Marton] Majer and Ibolya Majer. Uncle Moric and Aunt Roza lived for a while in Gyergyoszarhegy, where we lived. They had a big shop. These shops were called chandleries, because one could find everything there. Since they were more enterprising than my father, they moved to Brasso. They wound up the shop when they moved away. I don't know what kind of business they did in Brasso.

The two boys and the girl too studied to become dental technicians, if I remember correctly. Jeno had an office in Brasso, and Ibolya worked with him as a dental technician. Marci moved to Sepsiszentgyorgy, and he got married. Jeno didn't get married, but Marci did, and he lived in Sepsiszentgyorgy with his wife. It is likely he had a dentist's office there too; I don't know this for sure, because I never visited them in Sepsiszentgyorgy. But I did visit Jeno a few times in Brasso.

Jakab was the youngest of the brothers. I can't tell much about his early life, only about his later years. He was a bachelor for a long time; he only got married at an advanced age. He was somewhat of an eccentric person. He had whims, he was very peculiar about everything, for example he wiped everything. He even blew on the lump of sugar before putting it into his coffee, and he was extremely meticulous. As he didn't have his own shop, and he was old, but didn't have a family yet, he had this custom of always going from one brother to the other. So he stayed for a while here and there. Later he finally got married. They lived in Marosvasarhely; his wife had an interesting name: Piroska Noszai. After his deportation [and death during the Holocaust] we inherited what Uncle Jakab had left behind: a house and some furniture.

My father only finished elementary school. None of the children left the village [to study]. They grew up there, and at that time they weren't sent to high school, because there wasn't such a thing. I think one had to finish seven grades at that time, only later one had to finish eight, if I remember correctly. [Editor's note: Magda Fazekas's father was born and went to elementary school at the time of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The compulsory school attendance was six years of elementary or public school.]

My father was a soldier in World War I, he was enrolled as a soldier, but he didn't go to the frontline. At the time of World War I the family fled to Budapest. [Editor's note: One of his children, Jeno Struhl, was born there, but afterwards the family returned.]

We lived in Gyergyoszarhegy [in Romanian Lazarea]. Gyergyoszarhegy, Gyergyotolgyes and Ditro constituted the same valley, the Gyergyo [the Gyergyo, in Romanian Gheorgheni Basin]. It is likely that people from Gyergyoszarhegy owned some woods, because my grandfather was in contact with them, and these people from Gyergyoszarhegy said that since there wasn't a proper shop in Gyergyoszarhegy, well my grandfather had sons, so why shouldn't he send one of his sons to Gyergyoszarhegy to open a shop there. And that's how my father got to Gyergyoszarhegy from

Gyergyotolgyes.

My father opened the shop when he was still a young man, before getting married. He ran his shop in Gyergyoszarhegy for fifty years. This shop was that sort of store which wasn't only a grocery, but they were selling clothes too. All kind of clothes, textiles, there was drapery as well, off- the-peg clothes at that time. But not from the beginning, when my father opened the shop; he enlarged it gradually.

I don't know where my father's first wife came from. She died at childbirth. Her daughter was given the name Frida, she was born in 1901. We used to call her Friduska. Some five years later my father got married again. In fact, Friduska was raised by my mother. Friduska was always sickly, from her early childhood on.

Friduska got married at a young age, so she left Gyergyoszarhegy. Her husband was Izidor Hirsch, he was from Marosvasarhely, but they lived in Brasso. I know she had a dowry when she got married. They had one boy, who was called Miki, or Miklos. Izidor had a nice family house in Marosvasarhely. This Izidor was a real gentleman, I won't tell anything else about him, maybe he was spoiled at home, I don't know. However, at the time of the Second Vienna Dictate 2 he was in Marosvasarhely, and didn't go back to Brasso. Friduska and his son, Miki, were in Brasso, she and the child survived, and Izidor was deported.

Miki first studied to become a dental technician. He was a great sportsman; he was even a champion in gymnastics. Once he had this daring idea, and enrolled at university, finished his studies, and became a gym teacher. Sometime in the 1970s Friduska emigrated to Israel with her son. There Miki worked as a gym teacher until his retirement. Friduska suffered a lot because of her poor health. She was ninety-four years old when she died in Israel.

It is true that at that time all marriages were concluded through mediation. There were matchmakers. My mother was very young, only about eighteen years old, when her stepmother urged her to get married. She was married off very early. There was an age difference of twenty years between my mother and my father. I presume both weddings must have been religious weddings, and they had an official [civil] one too.

I didn't know my mother's father, my grandfather from Piatra Neamt, he died very early. My mother was called Fanni Pascal, and my grandfather's name was Michel Pascal. According to others, my grandfather had a very jovial character. They were rich; they lived a life of ease. He was a grain and crop trader and an exporter, so he didn't trade only within the country, but he transported goods from Piatra Neamt to foreign countries as well. My sister Dorika, who visited them in Piatra Neamt, told me that they were really comfortably off.

My mother was the eldest among the siblings. Her mother died, so her father got married again. The new wife gave birth to three children: two boys and a girl. The elder boy was called Izidor, the younger was called Filip, and the girl's name was Caty.

My mother didn't speak Hungarian at all. And she got into an environment where nobody spoke Romanian. My father didn't really speak Romanian either. It must have been hard for my mother to adapt. She had lived in a town, and had studied in the French Institute in Galati, so my mother spoke French and Romanian, but she didn't speak Yiddish. My father didn't speak any other

language but Hungarian and Yiddish. So it wasn't a truly appropriate marriage. However, my father must have been a lively man, who had seven children, one after the other. What can I say? My mom was a beautiful woman...

I was in Piatra Neamt only once with my mother, but I was so little, I can't remember that. I can recall only the fact that we went there in a horse-drawn carriage. There weren't other means of transportation then, only the horse carriages, there weren't cars or trains. My mother told me that the bridge we had to drive across nearly gave away; it was touch-and- go that we didn't fall into the creek.

Mother told me one more thing: It seems there was already a cinema there back then, and she told me she took me to the cinema, and we watched a silent film. And allegedly I kept asking her, 'Mother, what are they saying?', and bothered the public.

At the time of the monarchy there weren't borders, one could travel abroad too, one could go wherever they liked to. My mother told me they used to go to health-resorts, they didn't need any passport. Later all this changed, because when Transylvania became part of Romania 3, they couldn't travel as they pleased.

The cousin of my mother, who lived in Galati, was called Amelie; her husband was called Isak Katz. He was an exporter in Galati, they were very wealthy; they owned a whole street of houses. Amelie was my mother's cousin on her mother's side, I know that for sure. When my mother took me to visit Amelie's family, and led me into the drawing room, I, a girl from Gyergyoszarhegy, was astonished of how a rich man's home looked like. I remember only this drawing room, that it was big. It was amazing. Comparing to a village house such a drawing room - since I hadn't had seen anything similar before - was quite something. I can only remember that the carpets were very huge.

Amelie was such a gentle woman, and even her name was so beautiful, I've always liked this name since then. Her husband was smaller than her. This aunt of mine wanted to adopt me. They didn't have any children. But my parents didn't want me to leave our home. Then Amelie adopted the daughter of another sibling, she was called Clarisse, and so it was inappropriate to stay there. I only know that Amelie became embittered, because this Clarisse they adopted was ill.

Once my eldest sister, Dora, spent an entire winter in Galati with Amelie's family. She always told me how unforgettable the time she spent there was, because they had a large society. And they introduced my sister into this society, and there were balls all winter along; they went from one place to the other to spend time there. Their life consisted of nothing but entertainment. My sister spent even the Purim ball at Amelie's. She told me they put on costumes at Purim. She wore a dinner jacket of Amelie's husband. The uncle was of small stature, and my sister wasn't tall either, and this outfit suited her perfectly.

My sister had a friend there, she was called Szilvia, and this friendship was so deep that they corresponded for a very long time. By the way, this sister of mine had marvelous handwriting, her letters were like pearls. I always admired her, I used to read some of her letters; she could express herself so nicely. We used to tell her that, in fact, she should have become a writer, given the imagination she had. But she couldn't enroll at university, the family didn't have the means for that.

In Galati they spoke French and Romanian. I didn't speak much Romanian. Mother, since she was from Piatra Neamt, spoke French; however, they didn't speak French, but Romanian. Dorika spoke French, but not so well. She went to school in Kolozsvar, Mark Antal ran a school there, the Tarbut Jewish High School 4. I don't know which languages were compulsory in the Tarbut, but Dorika learned languages unasked. She spoke both English and French. Szilvia was also a highly educated girl, I mean the girl my sister was friends with. They corresponded in Romanian. Later Szilvia went to Csernovic [Chernivtsi]; I don't know whether she was married or not.

Izidor, one of my mother's half-brothers, lived in Bucharest. He had two sons, Felix and Mihai. I don't know what Izidor's occupation was, but I know that Izu's - that was his nickname - elder son Felix was a very clever boy, and finished three universities. He studied law, mathematics and gymnastics. Finally he became a great sportsman, he was even a trainer. He is a very intelligent and witty, an extremely funny person. He still lives in Israel, so we are in contact, and we talk on the phone too. Felix will soon celebrate his 80th birthday, in September [2007].

As far as Mihai is concerned, he studied to become an actor, but he didn't work as an actor in Bucharest, but as a director. His wife is a psychologist. Their family name is Pascal. Mihai didn't have any children, nor did Felix. The wife of Felix was a chemist. Izu died in Bucharest, I know that. When Dorika and I were in Israel, we met Mihai. At that time Felix and his family still lived in Bucharest.

There was some problem with Caty. I don't know much about her. She lived in Piatra Neamt with her father. Filip lived in Dorohoi; he had a daughter. I don't know whether he died in Dorohoi or emigrated, but I know that his daughter left for Israel.

One thing is certain: my father was very jealous, and he was always afraid that my mother would cheat on him. Well, nothing of the kind happened, but everybody was infatuated with my mother, that's for sure. Originally, before she got married, she had red hair. But she thought red hair would be too prominent in a village. How she had a chance to dye her hair black in Gyergyoszarhegy, I don't know, but I knew her only with black hair, and she always used to do her hair marvelously. It was simply out of the question for my mother to be seen when her hair wasn't done nicely. She never went to the hairdresser; I can't imagine how she could dye it herself.

My grandchildren - my daughter's two daughters - both have red hair; they inherited it from my mother. My children didn't inherit the red hair, but my two grandchildren did. Both have the same red hair as my mother. My little grandchild says that she noticed that she resembles her grandmother. What I thought about my mother as a child, I can't remember, I only know I still considered her beautiful when I became a grown-up.

Growing up

We were seven siblings, I had a half-sister too, Friduska, from the first marriage of my father, and seven of us were born from his second marriage. My brother Joska was born in 1907, at that time Friduska was six years old.

In Gyergyoszarhegy we had a nice, big house with a garden. In the front there was the shop, and we lived on the backside. There was a nice living room; the living room gave onto the dining room, and the dining room onto the bedroom. And between the living room and the kitchen there was

one more room, which didn't have its own window, only a glassed-in door opening onto a large glassed-in porch. This room was lit through that porch.

We had no bathroom. Washing was organized in that we brought water from two neighbors. The well-water of the neighbor who was closer could be used only for washing. From the other neighbor we fetched the water we used for cooking and drinking. We had well-water, it was very delicious, cold and clean. The laundry was washed in a big vessel; and there was a woman, who - I think - came once in a month, and washed all the dirty laundry. She washed it in a tub, it was made of wood. The day before we soaked the laundry, and when she came, she started to wash in the morning, well, she was washing the whole day long. The washerwoman, Aunt Anna her name was, was an old Szekler woman. I tell you honestly I always felt sorry for her having to wash so much laundry in one day. I always helped her, once I had grown up a little.

Back then the practice was that we boiled the white laundry, the bed-linen - as at that time there was only white bed-linen, we didn't have any colored ones - in a big washing pot on the kitchen stove. We didn't have any other detergent, only washing-soda. After that we rinsed it in the streamlet. There was a streamlet in front of the house, and there was one on the other side of the street too. The streamlet had a quite speedy course, we made a dip into the streamlet, so that the laundry could be shaken there, and since it was running water, the water was replaced continuously. One could wash the laundry so well there that it turned snow- white.

Then we blued and starched the laundry. It was called washing-blue ultramarine; one could buy it in small bottles. The woman put water into the tub, added a few drops of the ultramarine washing-blue, and then she poured in the starch we had dissolved previously. The starch was available in pieces, not as a powder. Certainly one could buy it in my father's shop too. These pieces of starch had an interesting shape. We mixed the washing- blue and the starch with water, and we got light blue water, and then we put the white clothes, the bed-linen and the table-clothes into that. At that time we used only white table-clothes at meals, because we didn't have any other.

Afterwards we wrung it out and hung the laundry in the loft. It was very difficult to go up with the laundry basket, because a steep stair led up there. This part was the hardest. I was dragging the laundry basket from one step to the other, and somehow I arrived up there - I had opened the loft's door previously, so that when I got there, I could put in the basket directly before entering myself. Wires were put up in the loft, and I hung the laundry there. I remember that when I was a little older, it was rather me who carried the laundry up to the loft, like Attila Jozsef's mother. [Attila Jozsef (1905-1937) was one of the most outstanding Hungarian poets of the 20th century. His mother was a poor washerwoman, who died when he was only 15. He immortalized the image of her in his classic poem, 'My Mother (Anyam).']

The notary public lived in the court from where we carried the good water, the drinking-water. His name was Jeno Zakarias, and his wife was an extreme anti-Semite. She looked down at us, 'the Jews' - that's how she called us in a derogatory way. The other neighbors, in front of whose house the streamlet ran, where we rinsed the laundry, were called Bartis. The man was called Ignac Bartis. They were extremely decent people, we could go there for water whenever we wanted to; we never felt we bothered them. They always used to say that the more we draw water from the well, the better the water gets.

At that time you could buy in our shop, for example, carob-bean. Children loved it. I saw carob trees in Israel. Of course I didn't see carob-bean on it, which was elongated, and it was hard inside, but if you bit into it, it was like honey inside, it was this mass, and a little seed. Where this came from, I don't know that, but it came in sacks. [Editor's note: The pod of the evergreen carob tree (Ceratonia), which grows wild in the eastern part of the Mediterranean sea-cost, contains much sugar; both humans and animals consume it. Before WWII poor children ate it as sweets.]

Back then coffee was transported in the same manner, in burlap sacks. [Editor's note: The burlap sack is made of jute fibers, a plant growing in Asia]. I can't recall anymore from where my father got his merchandise. The shop had a part which was the grocery, and then there was the textile section, where one could buy drapery. The shop was spacious. We had all kind of groceries.

In the shop the shelves had little compartments, and in these compartments were, for example, nuts, figs, in another coffee and so on. The coffee wasn't really selling, because there wasn't a market for it. I think it was only us in the village who drank coffee; Mother was roasting the coffee, and it had such a nice smell. But I never drank coffee, I didn't drink it until my adulthood. Mother learned this at home, she was accustomed to it, but it wasn't customary on my grandfather's side to drink coffee. Mother was from the Regat [Romanian Old Kingdom]; she was the only one to drink coffee in our family.

We didn't have Jewish neighbors; there weren't many Jewish families in the environs. My father's sister, Aunt Roza, her husband and their children also lived in Gyergyoszarhegy, they were merchants as well, but they didn't live in our neighborhood; they lived in a different part of the village.

There was a sawmill in Gyergyoszarhegy, its owner didn't live in Gyergyoszarhegy, only the mill was there. The owner lived in Gyergyoszentmiklos [in Romanian Gheorgheni]. He was called Szekely, his partner was called Margitai. 'Szekely es Margitai' - that was the sawmill's name. Jewish families who came from Maramaros worked there. The entire family lived there, but only the men worked in the factory, and they lived on that. They were poor people, as you can imagine.

These people did the shopping in our shop, on credit; they always paid when they got their wages. There was a book, my father called it the 'book of the accounts.' And he wrote in this book what they had bought, and they paid on the day they got paid. This was completely a matter of trust. The worker was sure he would pay only the amount he had bought goods for.

My father was selling flour too, he even had competitors, but my father could sell more because he was selling flour from the Banat. One could buy flour from Szaszregen [in Romanian Reghin] too, because there was a mill there too. But it wasn't flour made of the grain from Banat, there was a difference in quality. My father always sold the flour at a somewhat lower price, so many people came [to buy it]; the quality of the flour was better, and the price was better too. That's how things were then.

These factory workers had many children, at least three or four. We didn't really mix with the girls, only my brother had friends among these boys. Andor, my little brother, played with these children. This happened in summer, when he was spending his holidays at home.

At home, we only had a kerosene lamp, which we used for lighting. But it was only us in the village who had a so-called Aladdin's lamp, which equaled the light of a hundred candles. That's what my parents used to say, that this lamp had the light of a hundred candles. When lit, this lamp usually was placed in the living room. And it had such a strong light, that if the shutters weren't put up, you could see it shine out on the street. The lamp was beautiful; it wasn't made of porcelain, but of metal. It must have been a kerosene lamp, it just had a part which had to be placed upon it. They said that the piece to put upon it was so thin and sensitive, that if you didn't handle it with care, it could crack. They called it mantle, the thing they put on it. [Editor's note: The interviewee is most likely talking about a gas lamp.] And when you lit the lamp, it gave such a great light. And of course it wasn't like a bulb. After being used, it went flat. Therefore we didn't use it all the time, so that it didn't get spoiled. We lit it rarely, mostly if we had guests or on holidays. Of course we lit candles too on holidays, and we used a standard kerosene lamp too.

We heated with beech wood. We didn't buy much pinewood. It was always my father who purchased the wood. There were people who rented out horse-drawn carriages, and he went to the neighboring village like that. There are several villages around Gyergyoszarhegy: Gyergyoalfalu [in Romanian Joseni], Gyergyocsomafalva [in Romanian Ciumani] on one side, Gyergyoditro [in Romanian Ditrau] and Gyergyotolgyes on the other. [Editor's note: Gyergyotolgyes is situated 41 km from Gyergyoszarhegy, so it isn't in its immediate vicinity.] And as far as I know the Gyergyo Basin consists of nine villages. [The Gyergyói/Gheorgheni Basin is in Hargita/Harghita county, at the upper course of the Maros/Mures River, between the Gorgenyi/Gurghiului and Gyergyoi/Gheorgheni Mountains; it is one of the coldest places in Transylvania. Its towns and villages: Gyergyoszentmiklos/Gheorgheni, Gyergyoditro, Gyergyoremete/Rimetea, Gyergyoszarhegy, Gyergyoalfalu, Gyergyoujfalu/Suseni, Gyergyocsomafalva, Vaslab/Voslobeni, Kilyenfalva/Chileni, Tekeropatak/Valea Stramba and Marosfo/Izvorul Muresului.]

My father had to go all the way to this last village I mentioned to find the appropriate wood. It wasn't all the same what kind of wood one bought, because if the wood is knotty, it doesn't crack well. We bought the wood by stack. I don't know how many stacks my father bought.

At home he hired a woodcutter, the machine was called circular saw, and he cut up the firewood into pieces. Then we chopped it up. Even I could chop up the firewood with a sharp axe. We piled up the wood nicely in the shed, then we took it out from there one by one, cut it into small pieces, and carried them into the house. There was a chest for firewood in every room near the stove. We did buy some pinewood too: for heating we bought only beech wood, but for cooking in the kitchen we used pinewood.

In each room there was a cast-iron stove; in the kitchen there was a rural stove with two plates and an oven, it wasn't big. That old stove was many years old, and we wanted a new one. Before deportation we had a stove- setter make a new one in Gyergyoszentmiklos, and we replaced the old kitchen stove with a super stove; it had two ovens and four plates. It was a very big and fine stove, but we used it only for a short time, because then the troubles began.

The bedroom was light yellow; there were two big wardrobes, as it was the custom at that time. There were two beds, one next to the other, and there was a dressing-table with drawers, which was very nice. The bedspread was very nice too. My mother could crochet lace marvelously, and in the middle of the bedspread there was a piece of lace and many ruffles. The drapes had the same

type of lace like the bedspread. In the middle of the room there was a big folding door witch gave out, and there was a separate door, a twofold door, opening onto the yard. And there was the same type of drapery above the door, but only with ruffles, because my mother couldn't put lace there.

My mother made a lot of lace, she did very nice needlework. She made not only lace, but a Persian carpet too. A real Persian carpet, because she had the original pattern. It could have been used for a joining carpet. We had one such Persian carpet, a handmade carpet, made by my mother. And she made kilim for wall-hangings, a kilim with fringes. Kilim is also very precious needlework. [Editor's note: Kilims are tapestry-woven carpets or rugs They can be purely decorative or be used as prayer rugs.] I couldn't learn it, I didn't have any feeling for needlework. Mother did an incredible amount of needlework, besides the fact that there were so many children to take care of. By the way, it wasn't my parents who slept in the bedroom, but the children. My parents always slept in the middle room.

The chairs in the dining room had bent legs and claret covers. There were six chairs and the dining table. There was a smaller table too with two armchairs. There was the glass-case, but we didn't fancy knock-knacks, figurines, we kept only silver or crystal in it. We had a chanukkiyah, it was made of silver, and it had place for eight candles. It had a relief on its back. There was a platter too and two other silver candlesticks. Then there was also a chest. We had a gramophone and many records; we mainly listened to opera arias.

In the living room there was a very nice couch with red plush. It wasn't just a simple couch with a back, but it had a part made of wood, even at its sides. There was a wardrobe with a mirror, and a table and chairs. In the other one, in the dark room there was a big sideboard. It was made of very dark wood. And all the porcelain we used daily was in that sideboard.

We kept the Pesach dishes separately in a chest in the loft. At Passover we went up there, took out the porcelain from the chest, put it in a basket and brought it down. And when Passover was over, we brought it back. Oh, those were very nice things! There was this one single cup, which was extremely nice. All the children wanted to drink from this one cup. We were little then, and, well, the elders didn't make any scene. I remember my brother and I quarreled because of that cup: 'I want it.' 'No, I want that cup.' In any case those dishes were very nice, and they always looked new, as we used them only once a year. I remember they were rather light colored. Certainly we had glasses, Passover glasses, as well.

My father observed Pesach and the seder tradition rigorously. I can still recall one thing: my father was putting the matzah one upon the other, and covered it with the matzah cloth. [Editor's note: On seder night there are three pieces of matzah covered with separate cloths in front of the head of the family conducting the seder. The three matzot represent the three parts of Israel: Kohen, that is the descendants of Aaron, the descendants of Levi and Am Israel, the rest of the children of Israel.] The matzah cover was embroidered nicely and we had silver, but we didn't have separate Pesach cutlery. We made a hole out in the yard, put the cutlery there, and koshered it by pouring hot, boiling water over it. Then we took it out from this hot hole, and this way the same cutlery could be used on holidays as well.

There was a nice and large yard in Gyergyoszarhegy. My mother adored flowers and the garden. A gardener came from Meggyes, and in the same way parks are set up, he made our flower-garden: in the middle there was a big round flower-bed with a thuja in its center. At the edge of the grass

there was a border, and the rose trees were planted there. And between there were pebbles from the mine in Gyergyoszarhegy. It was very nice. This flower- garden was in the front, and in the back there was the vegetable garden, which was separated by a wooden fence.

In addition there was another big fenced yard, where we kept poultry. We mainly kept chickens and ducks. For me it was the greatest experience when the little chicks hatched. I was sitting there all the time watching the little chicks hatch. My father liked looking after the chickens. It was always him who got up first; he recited his prayer, then went out and let the chickens out, as they had a coop where they were locked in. It was a storied coop, the chickens had a ladder they could use to get up to the upper coop, because their sleeping place was there. In the lower part were the ducks, because they couldn't go up. Since there was a streamlet in front of our house, the ducks knew well that if we opened the street door, they could go out, they could go all the way from the house to the streamlet, and after spending a good time there, the little ducks came back. They didn't need to be driven out or in.

We used to eat our own poultry, but not the hens. On weekends my mother always bought a hen from a villager, because we didn't slaughter those we kept at home. Mother used to go out, and had the hens slaughtered at the shochet's. We felt sorry for the hens we were keeping, because they were laying eggs, and so we always had fresh eggs. After a while we did slaughter them, I suppose, but we always felt sad about it. There weren't problems with the chickens, but we didn't let out the hens, they were always within their yard, because they dirtied the sidewalk, the entrance.

I went to the shochet as well. We always had a servant, but she couldn't be sent to the shochet alone, because she was afraid. It's not a pleasant sight after all. I didn't watch when the shochet was slaughtering the hens; I waited outside. The shochet didn't live in the place where he slaughtered the hens. It was a small building made of wood, and if I remember correctly, there was some kind of hole, and when he slaughtered the poultry, the blood flowed into that hole. And I think water had to be put in there too. We had poultry slaughtered every week, on Thursday, so that we could cook it on Friday. We didn't have a fridge, only a kind of cellar under our house, and it was cool there. Meat could be kept there for one or two days.

These girls served for longer periods - they were from the neighboring villages, but we had servants from our village too - but they were stealing a lot. In any case my father had enough of these girls from Gyergyoszarhegy, and so they came from somewhere else. My parents left to look for a servant girl. They asked her parents, settled the wage they would pay her, and brought the girl back home.

We had this one sweet little girl, she must have been around fifteen - the villagers sent their children to serve at this age, so they would learn a little. Back then they didn't attend schools or universities like today, but they were sent to learn at Jewish families, to learn how to cook, to have some idea about things.

One Saturday an old worker, who was working in the factory, came to us; he was bearded. When this little girl saw this old man coming to our house - I don't know why he came, maybe he came to ask for some money or something - she didn't say a word. In the morning she was missing, she had packed up and gone home on foot. Her parents had brought her by cart, and she went home on foot, when she saw this old Jew. Undoubtedly she got frightened. She left without a word.

These young girls came with a shawl, all their small stuff was packed in that, it was tied together, that was her pack, not more. And the shoes she had on her feet. She got frightened, who knows what tales she was told at that time. She might have thought that the Jew would do I don't know what to her. There were blood libels spread about Jews; well, surely this little girl was stuffed at home with stories like Jews baking the Pesach matzah using Christian blood. Such things were being circulated.

Our family wasn't too religious. My father didn't even speak much about religion, and since we lived in a real Hungarian, Szekler community, we were assimilated somehow, we weren't very religious, only my father was. Mother wasn't, she would have eaten treyf too. But this wasn't the case, as we kept a kosher household.

On Friday evening we had barches [challah]. Mother made meat soup on Friday; we had meat soup for dinner. She put pasta in the meat-soup. But Mother made something else too. She cooked a very special meal, a duck dish, which originated from the Regat, it wasn't a Transylvanian dish, and Friday night we ate that. It was made of the giblets of the duck, it was a stewed soup. Mother made the sauce of a very light roux, slices of lemon and raisins were put in the sauce. On Saturday we had roast, Mother made roast from a part of the hen. We cooked the potatoes in their jacket on Friday already, and on Saturday we just warmed up the potatoes, cut them into slices, and put them in the roast chicken sauce. It was very good. And we had pickles; I suppose we had cucumber then too. I remember that Mother pickled it in big jars, but it wasn't vinegary, but 'watery cucumber.'

Watery cucumber was prepared in the following way: cucumber was put in the jar, in the bottom you had to put sour-cherry leaves, dill, savory and horse-radish. Then you put the cucumber, salt, you seasoned it. I didn't lay the cucumbers, but I put them vertically one next to the other, I filled the jar completely, and then put savory, dill, horse-radish again, and I decorated the top with carrots cut in slices and zigzagged. It looked very nice. We selected the cucumbers put in vertically so that they would be of the same size. Sour cherry leaves were put on top too. I boiled the water, I put pepper in it, I placed a knife with a large edge under the jar [so the jar wouldn't break], and I poured the hot water in.

The next day, when it had cooled off, I filtered it again. I boiled the water again, I poured it over once more, and I covered it immediately with double cellophane. The fluid was clean originally. I put the jar in the larder, and I observed it. I saw the water getting cloudier day by day. It was cloudy for a few days, maybe even for a week, and then it started to clear up again. The cucumber was hard as a stone, it didn't become softer. This was the watery cucumber recipe. And the pickled cucumber was the same, but there was vinegar in the water too, so it was slightly sour.

That's what we preserved for winter, and we did the same with beet too. It also makes very good pickle, with horse-radish. The beet must be cut in slices, or it can be grated with a bigger grate, and the horse-radish must be put between, vinegar and a little sugar must be added. It's very good pickle.

On Friday evening we lit the candles, but that was it. We didn't have a menorah, only two standard candlesticks. Mother didn't put a kerchief on her head, she didn't pray, she only lit the candles. She wasn't religious, that's how she was raised. My father recited a blessing over the dishes. On Friday evening, when my father was cutting the barches, I can still hear it, it was something like this he

said: 'Baruch atah adonai, eloheinu melech ha'olam.' That's what I remember, it wasn't much longer than that; the salt-cellar was placed on the table, and he cut off one slice for everybody, dipped it in salt, and this was the Friday night [ritual].

Saturday evening, when the day of rest was over, we had two sorts of drinks, brandy and liquor, and we had cakes. My father recited the Saturday night prayer, we clinked glasses and ate the cake my mother had baked for this occasion. This was the Saturday night cake, the 'szakerli.' This was a fasting cake, which wasn't buttered or fatty. For Jews it is a rule that if you eat meat, you mustn't eat dairy food afterwards, but if you eat dairy food first, you can eat meat after that. [Editor's note: Meat and dairy is strictly separated in a kosher household, a certain length of time must pass between the consumption of meat and dairy food. The length of time varies ('For each river has its own flow' - says the Talmud, that is to say every region should follow its own habit): the wise men determined that six hours must pass between eating meat and dairy food; the rabbis in Germany and France permit the consumption of dairy food three hours after eating meat. One can eat meat half an hour after eating dairy food (with the exception of hard cheese) and after rinsing one's mouth, since dairy products can be digested in a shorter time.]

If I remember well, 'szakerli' was prepared in the following manner: flour, eggs, oil and a little baking powder was in it, it had to be kneaded. She shaped it like a rod, and cut it into thin slices, let's say an inch thick or maybe somewhat thicker, and dipped it into granulated sugar. And as it flattened out in the sugar, she baked it. As the sugar got baked on it, well it was very delicious. I always liked 'szakerli' a lot. I suppose Mother learned this receipt there, in Piatra Neamt.

My mother was a great cook. For example she prepared false fish. She minced the chicken breast, she put salt, pepper, egg and roll in it - she soaked white bread or something like that. If you are not kosher, in fact you soak bread in milk, not in water, but the kosher way is to soak it in water, and the bread must be squeezed well, you put it together with the meat, and mix it with the egg, pepper and salt. Then you prepare the sauce in which this meat must be cooked. Onion must be cut into small pieces for the sauce, you steam it, pour water over it. You put salt, lemon slices into it. You take some from the meat, you put breadcrumbs on your hand, and you shape a longish form, and boil it in the sauce. This is the false fish. It is very good, I like it very much. And we made that one with raisin, from the giblets of the duck. And there is one more which Mother prepared, it is also with meat cooked in white wine. This white wine sauce was very delicious.

My father was praying on every Friday evening. And not only on Fridays, but on weekdays as well; he got up in the morning, he put on the tefillin and the tallit, and prayed. He got up very early, at five or half past five to be able to recite the prayer. I didn't see my father doing this. I didn't see him, because by the time we got up, he had already finished all his prayers. My father performed this every morning, and after that he went and let out the poultry. But he did more, because we had a vegetable garden, so he picked some green plants, cut them up, mixed it with corn flour, and that's what he fed the little chickens. He threw maize for the bigger ones. He always did this early in the morning.

Perhaps my father prayed in that hall with a glassed-in door, in the porch; it was closed. There was a table and an armchair. He prayed from a book. [Editor's note: Prayers must always be recited from a book in order to avoid making a mistake.] I didn't get acquainted with Hebrew letters, I can't pray. I have a prayer book in Hungarian, the Mirjam. My parents had a prayer book that contained

the prayers both in Hebrew and Hungarian.

Though we lived in the countryside, we strictly observed holidays. I remember holidays were always very nice. The family gathered, so it was very nice. We had a festive meal, and we always had fruits. Fruits are very important, especially on high holidays. Since vine can't grow in that region, producers from the Regat used to bring grapes, they sold them by the box, and on holidays my father always bought a box of white grapes and a box of blue grapes. I like grapes very much, even today.

Women went to the prayer house rather only on Yom Kippur. I remember my mother going to the prayer house, but we didn't. On Yom Kippur we kept the fast. I kept the fast from my early childhood until the age of eighty-five. I always rigorously observed fasting for the entire day. Then my daughter said that at this age it isn't compulsory. Fasting doesn't apply to children. Well, I suppose I started it when I was twelve or thirteen. [Editor's note: One has to keep the fast only if fasting does not endanger one's health by any means. Children have to keep the fast all day like adults after their bar mitzvah, until that they fast for half a day.]

Each member of our family observed fasting, because my father expected the children to do so; otherwise we weren't such devout Jews, not even my father. He was praying; that's what his being religious consisted of. But we didn't eat at random, that is, we didn't mix dairy products and meat, which one must not do according to the Jewish laws. The night before Yom Kippur we had a more abundant meal, that's the custom, but I know by experience that the more you ate for dinner, the hungrier you got. As of late, I've reduced this abundant dinner. We always had meat soup. This was a custom, to have meat soup, then keep the fast, and when fasting was over, we didn't have meat soup again, but only roast. And I also remember that we used to have honey on these holidays, and of course barches [challah].

On Friday night, when my father said the blessing, we put a piece of barches into the salt. But on fall holidays, on Rosh Hashanah, the [Jewish] New Year, we dunked it into honey, so that the year to come would be sweet.

On holidays we had all kind of delicacies, cakes made by my mother: honey cake, 'strudli' - surely this word comes from German. [Editor's note: This is strudel.] It is a very thin dough, which she rolled so long on a big table, on a white table-cloth, until the dough became as thin as paper. Then she squirted it with a little goose fat, then put nuts on it, poured honey over the nuts, and then she folded it up. This can be made with apple, curds and cabbage - there are different types of strudel.

We didn't celebrate the Feast of Booths [Sukkot]. In those times at the Feast of Booths we met our relatives, they came to us. That's how we celebrated, but according to the tradition one had to set up a booth, decorate it and take meals in it. But I don't know anybody in the village who did this, since there were only very few Jews, and those who lived there were poor factory workers. So they didn't observe religion much.

Chanukkah is memorable indeed. Besides lighting the candle, there was a game we played only at Chanukkah. It was this spinning top, and we liked this game a lot when we were children. The stake was toffee, candy, not money. The spinning top was called 'tenderli' [dreidel], and presumably it was made of wood. We twirled it, and it either twirled, or tumbled over. I suppose the time counted, who could twirl it better, and for whom it twirls longer.

In those times the greatest delicacy was lemon drops. It was orange or lemon flavor, in the shape of a slice, but little. And we had those small cubes, 'Stollwerk' - a product of the Stollwerck chocolate factory - it was a delicacy one had to chew. It was a very delicious caramel that came in small cubes, and as you chewed it, it melted in your mouth.

I can't recall now what presents were given at Chanukkah, but since Chanukkah most often falls on the same period as Christmas, we certainly got presents. For Christians too it was a time for great presentations, so we, children got something for sure. A Christmas tree was a great desire of mine, and I tried to make myself a little Christmas tree; but I don't know anymore of what. I put a few fondant candies on it, so that I had a small Christmas tree of my own, which my father wouldn't see. It hurt me so much to see the Christmas trees in other children's home and not having my own.

In that village there weren't many Jewish families. There was the Majer family; Aunt Roza Majer was my father's sister, they moved to Brasso. There was a family called Izrael then, they also left the village, I don't know where they went. And there was the factory owner, but that family didn't actually live there.

There were two clerks in the factory, the bookkeeper and a works manager, Grunstein. He got married in Gyergyoszarhegy to a Christian girl, Zsofi Olah, who was my classmate in elementary school. Grunstein was deported, his wife was left behind with a child. His wife, Zsofi, died during the bombings. Grunstein returned from deportation, he remained a widower. The child, a little boy, survived too.

The other one, the bookkeeper, Ferenc Met, lived in Gyergyoszarhegy with all his family, and he had a sister, who was a very good friend of Dorika's, my sister. It is possible they were deported. Ferenc Met survived, and after the war he married a Christian girl from Gyergyoszarhegy.

There wasn't a synagogue in that village. There was a prayer house, but they gathered there only on high holidays. In the prayer house men and women got together. There were two rooms, one for men, and the other for women. There was communication between these two rooms. In fact it must have been the restaurant or something like that belonging to a Jew. These two rooms weren't a prayer house all the time, only on holidays. They kept service only on high holidays, but never on Saturdays.

My mother wore only a kerchief, because she didn't even have a wig. Nobody wore a wig in her family. They were religious, but not very much so. However, my father wouldn't have broken Sabbath. Somebody told me here in Marosvasarhely - she was a needlewoman and did sewing for us - that when she was a child in Gyergyoszarhegy, my father gave her candies: 'Come and make fire in the stove, come and light the lamp.' She told me this, but I can't recall this being so, because I know we made a fire ourselves. Perhaps this happened before we were born, that is, me and my younger brother, who recently died; we were the last two children in the family.

On Saturday we didn't work, and we didn't cook, because it had been done on Friday already, we just warmed up the food. One didn't sew on Sabbath, we didn't do anything on Sabbath. If the weather was fine, we went out to the flower garden, there was a bench, where we sat down and we were talking, or reading, because we had good books. We took the 'Brassoi lapok' along and would read that newspaper. But we didn't solve crosswords, because writing was forbidden. I liked solving

crosswords, I even sent the answers to the 'Brassoi lapok'; they published crosswords once in a week.

We took short walks too; there wasn't any promenade, but the forest was very near. There was a very nice road, which led to the Franciscan monastery. We liked it a lot. One could walk up there, it was a nice walk. We walked up there frequently, just we, children, and there was a bench in front of the monastery. It was quite a long walk to go up to the monastery. When we went up there, we sat down on the bench, and we watched the monastery. Two monks lived there. I understand there had been more monks before. There was a very nice young boy, sometimes he came out of the monastery's yard and sat down. And we would have a conversation with him. There weren't such strict rules that they couldn't communicate with people.

My brothers and I enjoyed nature a lot. As it was close, we wandered around the forest. There was a quite high mountain, it was called 'sharp mountain.' For us, children it was a great deal to walk up to its top. There was a spring too, it was called Hidegkut, it was quite far, but it counted a lot if we managed to reach it. When you're walking in the mountains, and you know there's a spring, it's a challenge to get there and drink some of that fresh water.

We didn't have any series of Hungarian classics, but we had a few Russian novels by Tolstoy 5 and Dostoevsky 6. My brother Joska liked the Russians better. I liked to read too, in my childhood, well not exactly Dostoevsky or Tolstoy, but to read in general. At that time I preferred reading light novels; there were series like the Pengo series. And there was Courths-Mahler, a German writer, back then I didn't know the writer was a woman. [Hedwig Courths-Mahler (1867-1950): German writer, internationally acknowledged author of romantic fiction, she wrote more than 200 novels.] It was pulp fiction, but it was successful. Well I've just found out from the 'Nok lapja' [magazine] that Courths-Mahler was a woman.

The series contained romantic stories, and it always had a happy ending. Usually we borrowed these books from somebody who came and brought books from somewhere. These girls, who served somewhere in a bigger town, stole these books. They came home to the village and they always brought such cheap books.

Then we had books by Brehm. [Alfred Brehm (1829-1884): German zoologist and writer, whose main work, 'Life of Animals' was a popular family book for generations. Brehm himself extended the original edition of six volumes (1863-69) to ten volumes (1876-79); this version was published in Hungary between 1901 and 1907, and a single 'concentrated' volume was also edited, the so-called 'Short Brehm,' revised by Raymund Rapaics.] These were books of natural science; it was rather my brother Joska who read these, for example 'The Love Life in Nature', we had that one too. [Editor's note: A work in two volumes by Wilhelm Bolsche, 'Love Life in Nature. The Story of the Evolution of Love,' published in Hungarian in 1912 by the Athenaeum publishing house.]

My school years

Back then elementary school was seven grades. [Editor's note: In Hungary before the Trianon Peace Treaty one had to finish the six-grade public school. In the case of Romania cf. 7.] My sisters finished elementary school in Gyergyoszarhegy and after that all of my sisters attended the convent, a Catholic school in Gyergyoszarhegy. It wasn't a gymnasium, but four grades of public school. [Editor's note: In Gyergyoszentmiklos, in the Saint Vincent de Paul convent, a Catholic

higher elementary school for girls opened in 1892.] In those times children finished four grades of public school, and they attended that one. They, my elder siblings, finished their studies there. Then my sister Dorika pursued her studies in Kolozsvar, in the Jewish High School, the Tarbut, she graduated there. The others didn't, they were left with those four grades. In those times people didn't really go to university, therefore four grades of public school counted for a basic education.

Andor attended the gymnasium in Gyergyoszentmiklos [established in 1908]. He lived in lodgings at Aunt Kati's; she was a simple Hungarian woman, who always let out rooms to students. First my elder brother, Jeno, lived there, and then Andor. I can recall to a certain degree Aunt Kati's face. And I can also remember that there, at Aunt Kati's was an awfully old woman. I don't know who she was to her. I have never seen such an old woman. This auntie looked dreadful, I think she wasn't sane.

It was not possible for me anymore to study there, because an order was introduced, and they didn't admit any persons of Jewish origins in that Catholic school. Thus we submitted an application in Gyergyoszentmiklos, in the high school for boys, so I could take the exams in order to have some qualification. I was studying at home, privately, and I sat for the exams in that high school. The boys, Andor and Jeno, attended that school too. But my brother Joska went to another school. I don't know the reason why they sent him away; if I remember correctly, they sent him to Lippa [in Romanian Lipova] in the Banat [region]. He went to a high school there.

That's all my education, the curriculum of four grades of gymnasium and languages. A teacher from Gyergyoszarhegy taught me all this, he was called Joska Ferenc, he was Hungarian. Due to his illness he didn't actually work as a teacher, but he was at home, at his parents', and he accepted to prepare me, he was teaching me. He used to come to our house, and prepared me at home. This was my possibility, thus I had as much education as my sister with her four grades of public school. As compared to my brothers, I didn't attend any school, but studied privately. I studied French and other subjects that were compulsory.

When I attended elementary school, I was the best pupil. So certainly I would have had the skill to finish a high school, even more... But my parents didn't have the means to send me somewhere else. There wasn't anything else in the surroundings, just the Catholic school in Gyergyoszentmiklos. In order to pursue my studies in a high school, I would have needed to go to Brasso or Marosvasarhely.

It is true though that if you're not in school, discipline is defective. It happened that when we were studying, and it was important to do so, because I had to undergo exams, the little chickens were just hatching. Well, I didn't want to miss that... So Joska arrived to make sure I keep studying; he was like a friend to our family. And he felt ashamed of saying, 'Magdika, don't go to watch the chickens now, let's sit down and study.' I was a big girl, and he was a very polite man. I was very sorry that this Joska died during the bombings in Budapest. We were on friendly terms with his parents too. They lived near us.

My brother Joska became an architect; he attended a three-year school of architecture in Csernovic. Dorika stayed home in spite of the fact that she should have studied at a university, because she was extremely clever; she was the cleverest of our family. Her susceptibility was remarkable. She stayed home, for my father was so old, he wasn't able to run the shop anymore, and Dorika took it over. She stayed home, and sacrificed herself, that's how this can be interpreted,

when such an intelligent person should have continued her studies, but instead remained where she was. Well, I oughtn't to say it was a backward, insignificant place, because Gyergyoszarhegy was quite a big village, but it was a sacrifice of her anyway. She transformed my father's shop, which was close to failure, into a prosperous and booming business, so to speak. She saved it from the edge of bankruptcy, it was insolvent, but she came to an agreement with the creditors, and she assumed to pay within a certain period. Later it turned into a flourishing shop.

When I was a small child, we had a large shop. But since my father gave people a lot of credits, he also ended up having buyers who didn't pay. And my father had debts too, because he got goods on credit, but if he sold them on credit, and they didn't pay for them, my father didn't have means for paying his debts. As a result, he was close to bankruptcy, but Dorika saved him. First, she didn't sell goods on credit anymore; she sold the merchandise only against cash. Besides she introduced the 'currents.' Currents were things that were much in demand; she made every endeavor to have these on stock all the time, and above all she sold them a little cheaper than others. She was traveling and purchasing things all the time, she was extremely busy, and thus she improved the business. Before deportation we had managed to recoup the losses quite well.

During the war

After the [Second] Vienna Dictate, in 1940 these laws were introduced, saying that a Jew can't be a trader, can't own a shop. [Editor's note: Anti- Jewish laws were extended to Northern-Transylvania on 26th-27th March 1941; the territory had been annexed to Romania, according to the Trianon Peace Treaty of 1920, and had been re-annexed to Hungary on 30th August 1940 according to the Second Vienna Dictate.] So we gave the shop to an Armenian trader, who took over not the shop as such, but the merchandise. He took over all the merchandise as it was. And we closed the shop. There were two Armenian traders in the village, and one of them took over my father's business.

When Hermin started to become a sewer, she worked in Gyergyoszentmiklos. After a few years she went to Bucharest, because we had an aunt there who invited her to come, because she thought Hermin was a much too excellent sewer to work in the country. My two sisters, Hermin and Margit, went to Bucharest together. My sister Hermin was the head of the showroom, and Margit worked with her, but she was only sewing. Hermin tailored and tried on dresses in her showroom; she employed several girls. They lived in Bucharest until the [Second] Vienna Dictate.

In 1940 Hermin came back to Gyergyoszarhegy, because she didn't want to be separated from her parents by a borderline. Margit had married before that. Margit's husband was called Matyas Gluck. Before getting married, he worked in the catering trade in Brasso. The parents of Matyi [Matyas] also lived there, in Brasso. He spent many years in Paris, but then came home. In fact he was a goldsmith, a jeweler by his original profession; that was his basic trade. In those times there were Iron Guard 8 actions in Bucharest, and Margit's husband was an illegal communist, and he was afraid of being caught by the Iron Guard, as that would have had consequences. So they fled Bucharest and went to Csernovic. They thought they would be safe there.

In 1940, when the Hungarian authorities came in, they took over public administration here in Transylvania 9, it was then when they started to pursue the boys [the interviewee's brothers]. We suffered insults, because they were instigated [the population by the authorities]. They broke our windows, these kind of things occurred. And we suffered personal mistreatment, not me, but my sister. Then the gendarmes took away the boys from Gyergyoszarhegy, because they were

pronounced to be unreliable for sympathizing with communism. My brothers didn't enroll in any political organization, but once my younger brother, Andor, had written on a box in the shop: 'Long live communism!' Well, he was a child, he was fourteen. [Editor's note: Therefore this must have happened around 1936.] And if he wrote that, then certainly the other boy must be a sympathizer too, right?

There, in Gyergyoszarhegy, was a gendarme who called on us and said that the boys would be taken away the next day. Yes, he told us. And I didn't forget his name either: Zoli [Zoltan] Toth. This boy was such a sensitive person. I thought so many times that we should have tried to find this Zoli. He was from Hungary, but he was a soldier in Gyergyoszarhegy, for when the Hungarian army occupied Transylvania, all the gendarmes too came from there, they were from Hungary.

After the gendarmes had taken them away to Gyergyoszentmiklos, my sister Dorika went there and tried to arrange for them not be taken to a forced domicile. The notary public was from Hungary, the judge was from Hungary - all these posts in Transylvania were taken by people from Hungary. Dorika went there and took steps to see what would become of them: would they be imprisoned, would they be killed? Dorika was such a diplomat, one rarely sees. She was both beautiful and clever. She couldn't get along with one of them so well, but the other was nice, he listened to her. Dorika could ask, beg them so nicely not to do any harm to these boys, and at the end he said, 'I will take care that the boys will be taken to a convenient place.'

That's how they got to Tolnatamasi, to Transdanubia. There was a Jewish family, the Revai family, and they had a daughter, Zsuzsi. They were forbidden to go elsewhere, but they could move within that place, and they became friends with this family, and they were accepted into it. Not as to live there, of course, because it was settled for them where to stay. I don't remember precisely where they had accommodation. However, this Revai family supported them a lot; moreover there was a great love story between Zsuzsi and Andor.

Later they got their call-ups to the labor battalion 10, but only Andor was taken, first to Ukraine, then further on to Russia. In the meantime Jeno was in hospital in Budapest. When he was released from the hospital, he was assigned to another work battalion in Hajmasker. When they wanted to bring them from Hajmasker to Germany, he escaped, assumed a false name, and hid in Hungary. He spent a longer period in Gyor under the name Bitai; he took up that name, and he said he was a Hungarian deserter, that he had escaped from Romania. And the truth never came to light; people didn't have suspicions.

After the Hungarian authorities entered Gyergyoszarhegy, our pursuit began. Yet, until 1942 they allowed us to remain there. The Germans were still far away, and in 1942 the authorities of that time expelled us from Gyergyoszarhegy, but not in the pursuit of a German order. In winter, in December, they allowed us two weeks to wind up our home. Most of our belongings we gave away for next to nothing. There were some who made use of such a situation, and came and bought things, for next to nothing. We tried to save some of the things by sending them to Marosvasarhely, because my brother Joska, who was an architect, lived there with his family. They [the authorities] sent us away on the grounds that we lived near the border with Transylvania, but, in fact, we were far from being on a borderland, the borderland was not even in the surroundings.

The nearest border to us would have been Piatra Neamt, it was close to Gyergyotolgyes, where my relatives lived. Of course they were ordered out too, but they really lived on a borderland: Uncle

Herman, Aunt Cecil and Etelka and the Lobl family. They were ordered out even earlier than we were expelled from Gyergyoszarhegy, and so they could find a place in Marosvasarhely. And they were deported from there, from Marosvasarhely. As for us, we went to Transdanubia, to Kaposvar.

I can't tell now whether they sent us a written notice, or just summoned us to the parish hall. In any case, we knew we had to go. We had to go, we couldn't appeal, we couldn't do anything about it. We couldn't find a place in Transylvania to go to. Neither in Marosvasarhely, nor in Kolozsvar, nowhere. Finally we went to Transdanubia, because our two brothers did work service there, we wanted to be near them to be able to meet them, and that's how it was. We were assigned a forced domicile in Kaposvar. Andor and Jeno lived nearby until they got their call-ups to work service.

Everybody had a bundle with their things; we didn't have suitcases or handbags. We were expelled from Gyergyoszarhegy in December 1942. In the depths of winter we had to leave our home. My father had lived in this village for fifty years. This happened one year and a half before deportation. We had to leave our home twice, first in 1942, then in 1944. So we went to Kaposvar, because there was no place to settle in Transylvania.

In Marosvasarhely lived my brother Joska, the architect. Some of the more valuable furniture, the dining room's was brought here, to Marosvasarhely, and the villagers bought what wasn't of great value. Joska placed them somewhere. From the things that we could bring to Marosvasarhely, we found the dining room furniture without the armchairs and the small table; we found only the big table and the six chairs. Perhaps a mirror wardrobe too. My brother Joska didn't return from deportation. The furniture of this room, the desk, the wardrobe with the sofa-bed also belonged to the furniture of Joska.

So when they let us know that we had to move from Gyergyoszarhegy, we went to Kaposvar. My brother, who did work service, was near Kaposvar. He was already acquainted with the place, and he knew a family, who could get us an apartment. We sent there two wardrobes by freight train. One could transport no matter what by freight train, even furniture. This wasn't about deportation yet.

The apartment we could move into belonged to a young Jewish woman. She was called Judit Frisch, her husband was doing work service. She let us a room, a glassed-in vestibule, we could use the kitchen, but had no bathroom. I can't recall how we organized beds, because we had only one room. There was a couch in the glassed-in vestibule, I was sleeping there, the others in that single room. We were five there from the family: my mother, my father, Dorika, Hermin and me. My father was seventy-six years old then, my mother fifty-six.

Hermin brought a sewing-machine from Bucharest to Gyergyoszarhegy, and it was transported to Kaposvar together with the two wardrobes. Somehow we managed to pack up the Pesach dishes, we sent those to Kaposvar as well. Not any other dishes, only the Pesach ones. This was all we brought with us. Yet I don't remember whether we used the seder dishes in Kaposvar. I know, however, that there was a kind of storeroom in the back of the apartment, and when we got there, we put the box with the dishes there. But I presume we didn't observe Pesach there.

Jutka was a nice little woman, she was twenty-two. Her voice, just as her mother's was marvelous, they were both singing in the synagogue. There was a very nice synagogue in Kaposvar. [Editor's note: The synagogue in Kaposvar was built in the first half of the 1860s; it was restored according

to the designs of Lipot Baumhorn, but in 1980 it was demolished, more precisely blown up. Only part of the two and a half meter high bronze table situated 12 meters high, on the top of the building was left, with the starting lines of the Ten Commandments.] And there was a rabbi too. On high holidays we went to the synagogue as well. The rabbi delivered a nice speech, and he spoke in Hungarian too, but he prayed in Hebrew as well. He was young.

We arrived in Kaposvar in December 1942; in the beginning we had a lot of trouble. Policemen came [Editor's note: presumably gendarmes came, since Kaposvar wasn't a municipal town] to inquire what we were doing there, why we went there. We explained to them that for us it was a forced domicile, we didn't come on our own free will. To this they said we had to present ourselves daily at the police station, all of us. Later they reduced this obligation so that we only had to go weekly. The police acknowledged that we weren't that sort of dangerous people, so why should they bother us to make us go there and call on us. Then they didn't bother us anymore. They weren't evil-minded at all. Until the very moment when deportation began. We spent one year and a half in Kaposvar, from December 1942 until 7th July 1944.

We weren't allowed to do anything else in Kaposvar besides trying to do some needlework or something similar. Since my sister Hermin was a sewer, the woman we lived at got her clients for whom she could sew. These weren't Jews. They paid well for it, because she could make such unbelievably nice things, she could design patterns too, not only execute them. And she always knew what would suit a certain shape, and what would not. In short she had work. Of course the person she worked for asked her where we came from, how we had gotten there, and when she told them, they pitied us. So besides paying her work well, they packed her up with food and things.

Dorika learned how to spin. At that time Angora wool, was very fashionable. First one had to learn it properly; one cannot succeed in it at once. A lot of Jews lived in Kaposvar. Most of the Jews were physicians, but there were craftsmen too, for example tailors and watchmakers. There was a kind woman, she was Jewish too, and she was engaged in spinning angora. She taught Dorika, and so she was spinning the whole day.

I tried to do something as well; once I was recommended to a family. Of course in those times Jews couldn't be employed. It was a very distinguished family, the husband was the director of the sugar works, and they had two little children. His wife was about to give birth to the third child, and so they needed somebody to take care of the two elder children. Well, I couldn't stay there for long, for these two children were unbearable, they behaved dreadfully. They were tearing my hair... I was the youngest child in my family, but I couldn't have pictured that such children could exist. They were spoiled, the little boy and the girl. I couldn't get on with them at all; I didn't know how such children should be treated. Back then a director general used to be called milord, everything was so formal. [Editor's note: Presumably the title of 'milord' wasn't 'officially' due to the director of the sugar works of Kaposvar; yet it is conceivable that his milieu promoted him informally.] I tell you honestly, I couldn't fit in this milieu, after two weeks I told them I could come no more. They knew too why I was there, and so they packed me all kind of things.

According to the local fashion villagers wore 'pruszli,' a crocheted bodice. It was an apartment building where we lived, the host was called Satler. Several families lived in that yard. One of the women used to work for the shop where these bodices were sold, and she said she would get a job

for me too. I learned how to crochet bodices. So I earned some money too, Dorika was spinning, and she earned some, but my sister Hermin earned the most. We had some money, the villagers had bought some of our belongings we had sold, and we had some savings, so we had something to live on until they deported us. This was the Kaposvar intermezzo.

We heard that Jews from everywhere were being deported. Then they gathered us from Kaposvar too. The street where we lived, Daniel Berzsenyi Street, was in the ghetto. Quite a lot of Jews lived in this street, and they brought here the Jews who lived in other parts of the town. The Germans came to Hungary in March 1944, I think on the twenty-first. [Editor's note: Germany occupied Hungary on 19th March 1944.] They deported us after that; I know for sure it happened in July.

Jews were prohibited from leaving the ghetto. They were not allowed to leave the street where they lived, and there too, they had to wear a yellow star 11. I don't know from where others acquired the star, but for those who lived in this yard my sister sewed them. We had yellow material, some satin, she cut that out, and she gave everybody a yellow star to put on. My poor sister had already become weaker. She was sickly, she had pain in the joints, besides she was sensitive too, she was always prone to get a cold, she had a cough. Yet she worked a lot in Kaposvar. She always had work to do, she was called to families all the time, and she did go. The humiliation and all that treatment against Jews, that was astonishing. One could feel it in the air that something horrible would come. Yet what did come, we would never have thought of.

There were two young men, maybe they were civil policemen; in any case, they were from the police. We knew them from the beginning. They came to us a few times. Presumably they felt sorry for us. They called on us, stayed for a while, and we always offered them something. But it made us wonder about why they were coming to us now and then to have some talk with us... They wanted to prepare us somehow, so that we knew this would ensue, but they didn't say a word. The day before we were gathered, one of them had called on us, but didn't tell us we would have to go the next day. However, he came there. I suppose he liked me and maybe he thought he could save me. Because he knew something would happen. But in the end he didn't say a word.

So the way it happened was that they gathered us. They came into each house and told us: pack up and let's go. We had nowhere to escape. Those who were wealthy, the great manufacturers, the millionaires, bought their freedom. We were gathered in the riding-hall of Kaposvar. In other towns they gathered them in brick factories, but in Kaposvar we were gathered in the riding-hall. It was large, but one couldn't think of escaping from there. A mother saved two girls from there, because their father was Jewish, and she was Christian. We lived in the same yard with them. The father of the girls was either dead, or doing work service. I don't know how their mother arranged for them that they let out these little girls from there, where we were already gathered. But after they gathered us, one had no chance to escape at all.

While we were in the ghetto, it occurred that people were tortured - but we weren't among the tormented - in order to make them tell where they had put their jewels. Not the gendarmes tormented them, but there were persons fit for this, for not everybody could do this. These were bouncers; they were trained for torturing people. There were gentle people too among the gendarmes.

When we were already at the railway station, we saw a wagon where they put on Mittelmann, the pharmacist, who was a millionaire. We recognized another person too, whom we knew was also

very wealthy. We were poor. When we were put into wagons, I saw there was a separate one for these rich people, where only they would go. These people could survive for the Germans seized their fortune. They negotiated with the Germans, who could be bribed.

When we finally set off, we traveled in the dark. There was only a small window, one couldn't look out from there, and we were a hundred and two persons in this wagon. Crushed together, you could sit down only if you pulled up your legs. The train stopped rarely. Those, who could get at it, drank some water. You see, the train didn't have enough so everybody could have drunk some water. Once we stopped for a longer time, not only to get a little water, and we knew that wagon was uncoupled [the part where the wealthy people were]. So it was obvious why we stopped and remained still. Because the wagon was uncoupled, and they transported us further. [Editor's note: Centropa didn't find any reference to such an occurrence in the specialist literature.]

All I know is that when I returned to Kaposvar just after the war, in 1945, I entered the pharmacy, and Mittelmann, the pharmacist was there just as before. What had happened to the others, that we didn't find out. Certainly they all survived, but didn't stay there, since most of them left either for America, or for Israel. But Mittelmann, the pharmacist, stayed in Kaposvar. He was glad too to see me, but it was such a delicate matter that I couldn't ask him in which concentration camp he had been, or where he was set free.

The wagon was strictly locked; they opened it only when they gave us some water, and when dead bodies were thrown out. Those who guarded us until the border were Hungarian gendarmes. They kept on saying that if we had jewels, if we had a ring left, we should give it to them. I don't know anymore what their pretext was for requesting us to give them our jewels; certainly they didn't say 'for you are being taken away.' It was not likely, however, that people had anything on them.

When a hundred and two persons are crowded in a wagon, and air can get in only through that small window, one can image what smells were in that wagon. There was one pail you could use to relieve yourself. And they didn't stop frequently enough to be able to empty it, so you can imagine how it stank. Besides it was a hot summer, July, it smelled of sweat and all the rest. The traveling was unbearable until we got there, three and a half days later. All the family was up in the wagon, we were together. My father being seventy. [Editor's note: The interviewee's father was born in 1868, therefore in 1944 he was already 76 years old.] Alone the traveling until we got there was already such suffering...

They didn't tell us anything about where they would be taking us. We didn't know where we would arrive either, or where we were. At the Czech-Hungarian border certainly Germans took over the guarding of the train, because there weren't Hungarian gendarmes anymore.

The arrival at Auschwitz was terrible. The railway was laid down just until the entrance to the Auschwitz concentration camp. After such a journey of three and a half days, when they finally open the door, instead of getting fresh air, we smelled the smoke of the crematorium, a stinking, singed smell. By this time you could think no more. You saw the chimneys were smoking. You could think of nothing anymore. We didn't think of surviving anymore.

As we got off, they separated men from women immediately. And these Poles, who were there for years, because they had been deported first, they were at home there already, in striped dress. They had arm ribbons, for they were people of some significance. They told women with little

children at first to give the child to the elderly, because they would get a better supply. Well, there were some who didn't give them their children, they chose to take their children with them, and those who took their children with them, got into the gas-chamber. That young mother, who gave her child to her old mother, had the chance to get among those who survived, while the old mother went straight into the crematorium with the child.

At this moment my father was still there. The son of the householder was there too, because first they were exempted, as his father had I don't know what cross from World War I, he had some important decoration 12. They didn't have to wear yellow stars. But then the right to be exempted was taken away from them, and they were together with us. I told the householder's son, 'Take care of my father' - I recall this well. He was a grown-up man, I don't know why he was at home, because in fact he should have been a married man, but he didn't have a family. He lived at home with his family. His grandmother had been thrown out on the way, because she had died, she was eighty-something. And so his mother came with us, while he went with his father, that's why I asked him to take care of my father. But who would have thought that... I didn't think yet they would kill them, but I didn't have any good feelings.

Then we lined up as follows: Dorika, me, my sister, and mother between. Then selection followed: they let the three of us there and snatched away my mother. We didn't see her again... we never saw my mother again. I know that this Mengele was there, we found out consequently who he was. He performed the selection, it was always him who selected among those who arrived. [Editor's note: Historians generally agree that since more than 450,000 Hungarian Jews were sent through Auschwitz in a three month period, it is highly unlikely that Josef Mengele himself divided up tens of thousands of Jews each day.]

Later he came into the concentration camp where we were, he came together with a beautiful, blond, young SS woman-soldier. They rivaled in beauty. That woman-soldier was a blond beauty, and he was a male beauty. A tall, brown-haired, handsome man. You wouldn't have thought him so cruel. Mother was pulled away, and they let us go further, that was all. We preserved in our memory what Mengele looked like, because he showed up several times in the concentration camp.

After we were parted, those who were put on the right side went into the gas-chamber, and those who were put on the left, were taken to the bath to take a shower. Right after they were separated, those who were let to live, were taken to the shower room, and they even gave you soap. They took away everything we had on us, what we wore, they let us keep only our shoes. First they cut off our hair I think, then came the shower. Everywhere, everything, they shaved all our body hair.

The soap they gave us was cube-shaped, grayish. Coarse, grainy. And it was written on it: RIF, 'Reiche Jüdische Fette.' This means 'pure Jewish fat.' We weren't aware then what this monogram meant. Later we got such soap again, and we ignored it then too. [Editor's note: There are two conflicting views concerning the 'soap-issue.' According to one the soap manufactured from human fat is a legend based on a misinterpretation. The German occupiers distributed soaps bearing the 'Rif' inscription in the Polish ghettos. The Jews of the ghetto interpreted the acronym RIF as 'Rein jüdisches Fett,' which means 'pure Jewish fat,' and this was the basis of the belief that soaps were made from the Jewish corpses in the concentration camps. In fact RIF stands for 'Reichstelle für Industrielle Fettversorgung' (National Center for Industrial Fat Provisioning).] Right after that we

were given a simple linen dress, it was neither white nor grey. Only a linen dress, nothing to wear underneath.

Then they lined us up. We were always four in one line. Four when they selected us. After the shower we had to walk along a stony road; they were larger stones, not small ones. They told everybody in which barrack they had to go.

Such a barrack was around thirty to forty square meters large. And we were crammed in there, more than a hundred persons, like sardines. There was nothing on the ground, straw or anything, only the bare ground. And so I laid down on my shoes, those were my pillow. I was together with Dorika; Hermin was in another room. Why she wasn't with us, that I don't know. We would have liked to be together of course. It was settled how many would go here, and they pushed people in, and then it couldn't be changed, unless you made an exchange, arranged that one would go there, and the other come here, for the number would be the same. That did occur.

When we arrived here, in the barrack, they portioned us out one loaf of bread, which was brick-shaped; I don't even want to imagine what it was made from! In any case, it didn't look like bread at all. Everybody got bread for a week. It was gray, its color wasn't that of bread. I put it down at my place. Well, I thought if I went back there, the bread would be still there. But the bread was not to be found. I came back, and the bread wasn't there, and I saw the others eating, and I had nothing to eat... Dorika's bread too was taken away. Thus I was starving, because I didn't have any bread. On the very first day they stole my bread, and we never ever got an entire loaf of bread again. After that they only gave you enough for a day.

In the morning it was still dark when they shouted that we had to get up. We had to go out and line up, and stand there on the stony ground for hours, until they would come to count us. There were so many people crowded in one room, that you weren't cold there. It was such a place, where at daytime it was around forty degrees, so the skin got blistered because of the extreme heat, but in the morning you were freezing in that dress, as you were standing there waiting. And we huddled up, we warmed each other, because we were freezing. The temperature was almost zero at night. And this was the same every day. They came in the morning and counted us. Why they did this, that I don't know.

After this was over, they gave us some thin liquid, they called coffee, but it had nothing to do with coffee. It didn't taste like coffee, it was a slop we had in the morning. This was breakfast. We had some kind of dish; we got all kinds of mangy dishes acquired from who knows where, let's say a small pot or casserole. Everybody had a different one. Those dished were rusty, disgusting, but we didn't have any other. One could see that these had been thrown away, I don't know from where they collected them.

For lunch they gave us something called 'Gemüse.' It means vegetables. Well, it was a bit like hay covered with dust; it had nothing to do with vegetables. Just looking at it, I was overcome by such disgust, that I didn't even want to try it. When you first tasted it, you thought you'd never be able to eat it. Finally we did eat it. And they gave it to us in those repugnant dishes. Most of the people got diarrhea after one or two days, and became so weakened, that they couldn't live on, couldn't exist. I wouldn't say my stomach resisted, the most awful was when I had to go out in the night, but I didn't have diarrhea, interestingly enough. And that's how we lived for seven weeks, under such circumstances.

We didn't wash ourselves, because it was not possible. Once in a month you could take a shower. We didn't have any underwear, hygiene was lacking, yet I didn't have a rash on my skin a single time. I didn't have lice either. Not once. Our hair was closely cropped, but it grew, and later we had unbelievably beautiful hair. We had much nicer hair after being shaved than we had had before.

In Auschwitz after a while we stopped having menses, we were told later that the food we were given had bromide in it. [Editor's note: There is no actual evidence of dosing sedatives (bromide), though many people from different sources stated that prisoners were given bromide. Yet it is possible that bromide was needless: little food, beating, cold or on the contrary, heat, little sleep, terrible work conditions etc. wore out prisoners in a very short time, all this bore down their resistance.] Back then we didn't know the reason for it, we thought that it was because of nutrition, but in fact we didn't know, we were just rejoicing over it, so we didn't have to worry about that at least. This was good, that they did this, among all that evil.

In the meantime, during these seven weeks my sister Hermin fell ill. There was a so-called sick-bay, it was called 'Revier,' where they put those who could be, let's say, healed. She had an eruptive illness, it is called erysipelas. It started on her neck, and went down to her shoulders, and so she was in a sick-bay, where she was taken care of by a Polish woman doctor, who was a prisoner like we were.

I got beaten in Auschwitz once, when my sister was ill and was in the sick- bay. There was no water, and one day they brought one cistern of water for such a huge camp. And there was a stone tank in it. It was forbidden to approach it, nobody was allowed to go there. When this cistern was taken away, I ran after it, because water was still dripping out of it, and I wanted to get some water to take it to my sister in the hospital. So they trashed me, because even this was forbidden. They hit me and beat me...

Something else I recall was that we agreed not to talk, if possible, because talking too makes you tired, you loose energy, and so we decided not to talk and save some energy. Thus we remained silent for days, and that's how those weeks in Auschwitz passed. It is interesting that we thought we had a slight chance to survive: if we went to work. But we were afraid of selection, and that we would loose my sister Hermin. When she got better, she'd be let out from the sick-bay.

We were in Auschwitz for seven weeks. In fact this was Auschwitz-Birkenau. You could present yourself, they selected people for work, to take them away from there, but as long as my sister was in the sick-bay, we didn't go, of course. When she came out, we presented ourselves. In the meantime people were dying one after the other, I don't know how many daily. And the big car came. There were people who were still alive, but they were dying, they were still breathing, still moving, when they were thrown onto this car, the living together with the dead. When you thought of this, you thought you had to get away from there by all means. That's why we presented ourselves, when my sister was released from the sick-bay. This Polish woman doctor was there at the selection, and she remembered my sister. She was almost let through, but then they pulled her away. I got away from there with Dorika.

Dorika spoke to a kapo [concentration camp inmate appointed by the SS to be in charge of a work gang] - that's what they were called. She knew her, because she had made her a dress. She had brought everything: material, thread, needle. And there, in the Birkenau concentration camp 13 she had sewed a summer dress for this kapo. I recall even today that it was a nice, patterned

material. And now, when Dorika asked her to try to do something in order to get Hermin over to those who were already selected, this kapo hit Dorika so hard that she fell down.

We went further in a dreadful state of mind, we cried bitterly, because we were sad about Hermin having been left behind. She was very skillful all her life, she was very competent in what she was engaged in; in that sense she was an independent person. But she needed somebody next to her, company, all the time. When her sister fled with her husband, she couldn't stay [in Bucharest] by her own, because she was a little shy. She didn't like to be alone. Therefore we were grieving, because we felt that she would break down, that she wouldn't be able to stand it. I don't even know when my sister Hermin died. My poor sister, it is even hard to imagine what she might have been going through before she died. One does not forget such things until death...

There was one more selection, when a few more people were selected, perhaps Hermin would have been selected at this point as well. They put us into wagons, and took us by freight train to an 'improvement' concentration camp; the place was called Ravensbrück 14. We left Auschwitz in September. As far as I remember, we were there for a few weeks in order to 'improve.' Here we lived under, well, let's say, more human conditions. We were placed in bunks, and we got better food supplies. It is likely that we recovered our strength a bit while we were there.

The number had to be sewed on the dress. We didn't have names, but numbers. I don't know my number by heart anymore, but it is on my papers. We didn't get tattoos, because we were the last transport. They didn't tattoo us anymore. Those who arrived earlier had the number tattooed on their arms. [Editor's note: Magda Fazekas and her sister didn't arrive in Auschwitz with the last transport. Though the regent 15 stopped deportations on 7th July, Jews from Sopron (together with Jews of the surroundings gathered there), that is more than 300 persons were deported on 7th July; in the night of 8th July a deportation train left the HEV station of Bekasmegyer, which transported Jews from Kispest, Pestszenterzsebet and Ujpest 'concentrated' in the brick factory in Budakalaszi; in the same way were transported to Auschwitz on 6th, 7th and 8th July Jews from Budapest and from the country gathered in the HEV station of Punkosdfurdo and the brick factory of Monor, alike lawyers and journalists of the capital gathered in Csepel (evading the order of the regent providing for the ceasing of deportations). Yet Eichmann had 1050 inmates of the concentration camp of Kistarcsa and 500 inmates of the prison on Rokk Szilard Street (the Rabbinical Seminary) transported from Budapest East.]

Then they transferred us to Neustadt near Coburg, the center of this concentration camp was Buchenwald 16. This was a work camp. There were completely different barracks than in Auschwitz. Here the room was provided with water-conduit, one could wash. There was a long wash basin, and one could wash there. There was even a stove in the room, heating was useless though, and later we were very cold in this room.

They gave us work clothes, a gray overall made of strong linen. It had a red sign on the arm, which meant you were a prisoner. It was cut out, and the material was applied to it. If it had been sewed on, one could have taken it off. But as it was cut out and applied to it, if you escaped, you could not conceal it. We didn't have any underwear. The clothing couldn't be washed, because it wouldn't dry, there wasn't any heat in the barrack. We wore it dirty. In fact, I think we could have a wash once a month under the shower with hot water. In the barrack we had only cold water. I don't know anymore how many of us could go in at once. In the barrack we washed our face with our hands,

and we could wash somehow, but a thorough washing from head to foot we had only once in a month, as far as I can remember.

We were forty-two or forty-three in that room. There was an elder woman, Aunt Novak, I still remember her name; she was forty-two then and regarded as an old woman. She was the only one to be forty-two. The others were all younger. I was twenty-four, and the others weren't much older either. There was a French woman doctor of the same age as Aunt Novak, and since she thought it was too exhausting for her to work twelve hours a week in daytime, and then the next week in the night, she used to give her a certificate, saying she had a temperature, and therefore couldn't go to work. Thus Aunt Novak was always missing. One day she was taken away, because they had counted how many days she had been missing. The poor woman, she wouldn't have thought that would be the end for her.

We were given one loaf of bread, which was better than that in Auschwitz; it was more edible. And that single bread had to be cut into eight slices, eight people had to share it between themselves. So we chose a person in the room to cut and distribute the bread. And breakfast was a cube of margarine. A slice of bread, that was the daily portion. At noon we had soup made of turnip, and they gave you baked potatoes with it. They were counted so that everybody would get four or five potatoes. And that was lunch. Always at the same time, at noon, until two o'clock, or until it was over.

Then Christmas came, and they said we would have a special Christmas lunch. We were waiting for the Christmas lunch, for who knows what it would be. But it was nothing special; it wasn't Christmas-like, but the usual. Each day they gave us the same turnip soup and baked potatoes; it didn't vary at all. Yet the baked potatoes were an extraordinary delicatessen for us, hungry people. We would have liked to eat some more bread too, but we couldn't, because it had to be apportioned for the whole day.

Winter came, they gave us some shabby clothes, certainly they came from those things that were taken away from the people in the concentration camps, and were later passed on to these work camps. I got a coat too, a quite long one, it almost reached until my ankles; which was good in winter, when it was cold. Though the workplace wasn't too far, but we went there through the snow. My shoes had been stolen back in Auschwitz. So I stole a pair of shoes too. My shoes had been summer shoes, and I stole boots. All the time while I was in Auschwitz I feared that the person from whom I had stolen them would recognize the shoes, but it didn't happen.

At the beginning we had to learn the trade in the work camp, so to speak. This was a cable factory, the factory of Siemens [KALAG (Kabel- und Leitungswerke AG)], we repaired cables. They asked who could speak German, Dorika presented herself, and so she didn't get into the line, but to the place where they checked the work we were doing. Deficient cables were marked with a band to show the deficiency, and we had to repair them. But in order to be able to repair them, we had to learn how to do so first. It took at least two weeks until I learned it. First I couldn't imagine I would be able to do this, yet I managed to master it in the end. We worked twelve hours a day. The SS women escorted us from the barracks to the factory.

The supervisors were civilians, two old people, who oversaw work and the group in the factory. I can recall the name of one of them: Herr Rentsch, that's what he was called. Once a supervisor beat me, because I hid in the place where we used to hang the coats in winter. I couldn't stand it

anymore, it was night, I thought I would sleep there a little. He found me, and of course, he beat me. Well, he didn't beat me so hard as to break my bones, just slapped me in the face. The person who beat me, who found me hidden between the coats, was a little old man.

I wasn't a very keen worker, I was even called a saboteur. It was marked on each cable who was working on it, so one couldn't avoid trouble, if it came about. For when they packed up the cables, they checked if they could send them to the frontline or not. An appliance indicated if a cable wasn't mended right. Of course I wasn't enthusiastic, then an SS-engineer said it was for the third time that my cable wasn't good, my work wasn't acceptable, he said they could take me away, that was it. But Dorika, for she helped me out all her life, then too did... I wouldn't have thought it could have consequences. At that moment I was very afraid they wouldn't have mercy on me. It happened twice that I had to be saved from death, because certain death was in store for me.

The other case was much graver; I trifled with my life then too. The cables were covered with laths and leather belts. And since they didn't provide us with wood to heat the room, though there was a stove, I thought let's take home some wood... I cut the belts, and the laths fell out. We heated up the room well. That was all very well, but these things were missing, they started to search for them: why would these be missing, they didn't come back deficient from the frontline, so they must be somewhere. And so they searched for them. I happened to have such a cable on me, I wound it around my body, and I put on my blouse to hide it... The great searching began: let's see where the cables are, who has them, and who takes what they are covered with. What was I to do? I let it slide down next to me on the ground.

The SS-woman, who found the cable next to me, didn't beat me, just shouted at me. I thought they wouldn't spare my life for such an incident, because I had already committed another great sin, the sabotage. And this was stealing, so I had nothing to hope for. If you took out something from there, it was regarded as stealing. It was only me to do such nonsense - I was thinking only after the deed was done.

However, I couldn't even close my eyes for one week then, because I was always afraid they would come and take me away. Every day that passed, I thought: well, they haven't come for me today, but they might come tomorrow. I trembled for a week, day and night, but they didn't come. I don't know how I could escape this. This was the same as during selection, you had a narrow escape from certain death. And this was for the third time that I escaped certain death. I survived, and I lived to see this age.

Sometimes we had air raids; they emptied the factory, they took us into an air-raid shelter, and these SS-women were desperate, they were deadly pale, you could hear so many airplanes. And on the road, while we were walking, oh... bombers were coming. It was frightening, one could see them well. We were lying on the ground while they flew away, yet we were always afraid somehow, whether they could see from the above how wretched we were and that they should not bomb us. We called the airplanes silver birds. During bombings we were down in the shelter, and these SS-women came down with us, of course they didn't let us alone there either. They were so afraid, they feared for their life, they were young. We weren't afraid, because we thought starvation was over, a bomb would come, and at least... We didn't really have a joyful life after all.

Then winter passed, and spring came. We worked until April; the Americans were approaching, so they emptied the factory.

There were SS-women in the camp, and there were two men too. One of the SS- men was a young man, the other was elder, we called him uncle; he was a Wehrmacht soldier 17, who was a very gentle, well-meaning person, he never hurt anybody. The other didn't actually beat anybody either, but it did occur that he stroke angrily at a prisoner for some reason. One day another soldier showed up, we couldn't ascertain his rank, but an officer of higher rank came there, and he took a look into these rooms, as if our condition interested him. They said everybody should pack up. Everybody had a small bundle, even these SS, who escorted us, did. The stuff was put on a kind of cart. So whoever wanted to, put it there; and who didn't, would carry it.

I don't know for how long we were walking; this march lasted for two weeks without any food. I don't know when these officers and the others who escorted us ate, but this high-ranking officer even helped pushing the cart; for it wasn't a horse-drawn carriage, but the prisoners pulled it, it was some kind of pushcart. We didn't know what to think about all this. Of course they knew already that something was going to happen. Finally it turned out he had chosen a nice girl, for we were many, this camp was big, only women, and a lot... This was a girl from Maramaros; he kept on hanging around, because she could speak Yiddish, and Yiddish is very similar to German, and they could communicate.

Once when we stopped to take a rest - we were walking in a forest - there was a small lake, and we saw that one of the officers took off his gun, the other took it off too, and they threw it into the lake. Well then, we thought, we have no reason anymore to be afraid, they have no guns, they can't shoot us. It was a very good sign, this meant liberation was near.

We kept on walking, but we very extremely hungry. Well, it occurred that milk-cans were placed on the edge of the road, I suppose it was organized this way, that they were put out there, then transported to various places. These hungry people arrived, and of course nobody could drink of it, because everybody wanted to drink; they dashed against it, and the can fell over, the milk flew out, nobody got any of it in the end. That's how it goes with hungry people.

So we walked further, and eight of us - I can't recall anymore who these eight women were - dropped behind in the forest, because we thought if the soldiers have thrown away their guns, we have no reason to fear anything, we can stay in that forest, because there isn't any danger. And we lagged behind, and the transport went on.

It is a very sad memory for me, when I think back, that when we were on this two-week walk, it happened that another transport came; but so that we wouldn't see it, they drove us into the wood. And as they were passing by, we weren't so deep in the wood, they saw us there. And they shouted for us, I'm from Debrecen, the other said the name of a different town; I will always remember this. And we saw as they were walking away that they carried corpses on a cart, one's head was hanging down, another one's leg; they were thrown one upon the other, and they pulled them on the cart. Those skeletons pulled the cart filled with corpses, and we saw this from the wood.

After they left, we could hear the rattle of firearms, and when they drove us out of the wood, as we were walking on the road, you could see nothing else but brain, brain splattered out on the road. When they couldn't pull the cart anymore, they dug a hole on the roadside, and buried them there. After we got liberated, they found some of these buried bodies, and they asked us to take a look at them - I wouldn't have done it for anything in the world. My poor brother Jozsef must have been part of such a transport, and who knows where he was buried.

Until we saw what was going on among the soldiers [that they dropped their guns], they kept on counting us. When we lagged behind, the transport moved on. They went towards Czechoslovakia. We withdrew to the forest. Forests in Germany aren't dense enough for hiding; for if you went, for example to the Gorgenyi or Kelemen Mountains, there are such thick forests, that you can hardly be found there. However we settled, and one of us who spoke German well, she was called Magda Wittmann, she was a girl from Hungary, went to the village. There was a path in the forest, and she thought it would lead somewhere, she departed and made it to a village. There she was given uncooked potatoes, matches, and I don't know how, but we also got a pot somehow.

We made a fire and wanted to cook the potatoes. Of course the potatoes didn't get cooked, because as we lit the fire, we heard barking and voices nearby. We thought now they've noticed the smoke in the forest, they've perceived us, and they would come to catch us. We extinguished the fire immediately, we were very frightened. But they moved away. They didn't search for us, they were just passing by. We never found out who these people passing by were. But it was enough to get us scared. We were so afraid that we didn't dare to make a fire anymore. We didn't leave yet, but huddled up and slept or didn't sleep; in any case, the night passed somehow, and other nights passed too. I can't recall anymore for how many days we were there. I remember, it snowed that first night.

As we were lying on the ground, hungry, ragged, frozen, we must have been in a really bad state... Dorika's foot was covered with blood, because her shoes had blistered her feet during the long walk. We didn't have anything to treat or dress it with. We had nothing to tear to pieces and dress her feet. Then we decided there was no reason to stay in the forest, because we had nothing to drink or eat, and we would freeze to death if the weather stayed the same.

We departed, thinking: come what may, we are in such a deplorable condition anyway, if we stay, we will die from hunger. We were thinking a lot about where to head to, because we couldn't orient ourselves. We chose our direction at random. And as we were walking by the edge of the forest, a cyclist was coming towards us, and said that there was a village nearby. We weren't afraid of him anymore. We reached a village, but we had seen from afar that white flags were on the houses. There was no more reason to be afraid any longer. If a white flag was set up, it meant that only German inhabitants were there, no soldiers, and we wouldn't be caught.

We went into the village; the local farmers were cooking potatoes for the animals, we could smell it, and people saw that assistance was needed. They gave us milk and potatoes, and you can't imagine what that meant to us! We couldn't believe it was true. We didn't know whether we were dreaming it, or it was true. Then they said we could stay in the hayloft, but on the condition that no one would pee there, because animals can't eat hay that has been peed on. We promised we wouldn't; and so we could sleep one night in the hay. We were eight. I remember this very well. They gave us milk in the morning too, and we set off.

We set off, and then a jeep appeared...and one more jeep appeared. We were walking towards them, and they stopped. They were American soldiers. They told us to keep walking, because we would reach a small town, and the headquarters would be there, the Americans. We went there, and they took care of us, they gave us accommodation and food packages. We got a lot of delicacies from the Americans. There was everything one could desire. And we got such good accommodation. It was near a church. We could wash, then they gave us clothes, so we could take

off these awful things, these rags, and dress up properly. Not all of the things fit us, but as we stayed longer there, we could adjust the clothes we had gotten to fit us.

A German sewer did that for us. She was very kind, and they [the Americans] helped us of course, meaning that we were supplied very well. Due to the war in Germany everything was in short supply. Let's say it wasn't the case with the villagers, because they could produce everything themselves, but people in the towns had a hard time getting food, while we were supplied abundantly. For example, we could give things to this sewer who sewed us things from the stuff given to us by the Americans.

There was canned food in the American packages we got, and what I liked most was the chocolate, biscuits and peanuts, and besides American peanut- butter. I like it a lot, it is very delicious spread on a roll or piece of bread: first you put some butter, then you spread on this peanut-butter. And they gave us very fine jam, too, but it wasn't canned in bottles or boxes, there were at least five kilograms of jam. You could eat as much as you pleased. I don't know what it was made from, but I can't forget how good it was. Although we had so much food, we were eating carefully so as not to eat too much. However, it occurred that a person, for having weakened so much, fell over the food too eagerly - or it happened that they ate poisoned bread, they found in warehouses after liberation - and they died.

Later they transferred us from this town to another. The first one was called Mitterteich, and the second one was Tirschenreuth. [Editor's note: Both places are in Bavaria, 20-25 km from the border with the Czech Republic.] There was a big porcelain factory. There wasn't any trace of war in these places. There wasn't any kind of destruction. When we went to this other place, we were quite many. There was a 'Gasthaus,' a guest-house, where they put us up. [Editor's note: The German word 'Gasthaus' actually means restaurant, inn. However, many of these inns also offer accommodation.]

There were Hungarian refugees too, but they were sent away from there, I don't know where they found a place for them, and we were given their places. These were Christian Hungarians, fascists, they were in trouble, and they had fled for Germany before the war was over, for they were allies, you see. They could come here, because the Germans accepted them. Later they went to America, if they could, or stayed in Germany.

It was a guest-house with several rooms. We were there until September. We were given some aid, and we could buy food. But I remember well that this guest-house had a restaurant on the ground floor, you could eat there if you wanted to do so. But people kept on coming there, who, like us, had certainly escaped, and in the end we were too many. There were even Poles, I don't know where they came from. There were Italians, there were French too, but these were male prisoners, not women. Then little by little they left, they could go home, and we went home as well. We were there until September, when they organized our return home. We were given certificates we could use when coming home to certify that we had been deported, and the place where we had been.

Dorika and I could go home, it was organized for us. We were in Prague for a while, we were given food at the railway station, and we traveled on. The same happened in Budapest, and then we got home. We traveled by train. We didn't have any other papers, but those the American authorities had given to us when we were liberated. We stayed longer in Budapest than in Prague, but I couldn't tell for how many days. I didn't have anybody to visit in Budapest. Everybody we traveled

with on the train went where they originally came from. I don't even know what became of those six people we traveled with. I remember only one of them, one from Hungary. I can't recall the others anymore; we didn't keep in touch with them.

When we arrived in Romania, they gave us some money at the Romanian border. We came via Curtici [in Hungarian Kurtos], Arad. We came to Marosvasarhely, and we were placed where the dermatology is today, back then it was called sanatorium. Survivors kept returning, people we didn't know, we hadn't been together with them. We were there for a while, I don't even know for how long they looked after us. Then everybody had to look after themselves, look for accommodation, try to provide for themselves. We weren't from Marosvasarhely. My brother Joska had lived in Marosvasarhely, and we wanted to stay in his apartment, but of course it wasn't empty anymore, because when they had been taken away, other people had occupied their apartment.

They deported my brother Joska from Marosvasarhely, together with his family. Gyurika, their little son was six years old, when he was taken away. His wife and the child were sent to the gas chamber immediately. Joska, just like us, was left to live. My cousin, Jeno Lobl, who survived as well - his parents were killed, he and his sister Hedike survived - was together with Joska in Auschwitz, he told us after liberation that he was in deep despair, and Joska kept comforting him. The barbed wire fences were electrified, and whoever grabbed it, died. Some people committed suicide there, this cousin of mine wanted to die as well, because he couldn't stand it anymore, and my brother Joska encouraged him not to do so. Then they were transferred, my cousin got to a work camp, like us.

I don't know where Joska was taken; it is likely that the same happened to him as what we saw, that transport, those starving people, who couldn't walk anymore... When they saw people dropping, they shot them, well certainly my poor brother died in a similar way, but when and where, that we never found out. This cousin of mine, Jeno, survived, and came home; now he lives in Canada with his family. They lived in Bucharest before, he has triplets.

Margit and her family have a sad story. They fled from Bucharest to Csernovic, and from there they were fleeing further from the Germans. I don't know where it happened, her husband got down in a railway station to buy some food, and he missed the train. Margit went away on that train alone, and she got to Siberia. The Germans caught her husband, and took him to Auschwitz... She knew nothing about her husband, and her husband didn't know anything about her.

Margit spent six years in Siberia. But one, who is skilled in a profession, always can get on. She was sewing in Siberia too. Once she pricked her finger, it got infected, and she got phlegmon. She was very ill; it was very serious, similar to blood poisoning, it meant forty degrees fever, and she was alone. Luckily there was a kid, a young boy of fifteen or sixteen - that's what she told me later - and he took care of her while she had such a high temperature.

She survived, and she came home. She got home after six years. She came to Brasso, because we had relatives there, and she went to Aunt Lina, to my father's sister. Aunt Lina was the wife of a very rich manufacturer in Brasso. She helped her; Margit could stay with them, when she returned from Russia. Her husband came home too, he was liberated from Auschwitz. Her husband came home earlier than my sister, Margit.

Margit had poliomyelitis as a child, and as a consequence she had an ill leg. She was limping, she was operated on her leg I don't know how many times. She was disabled. And her husband thought that certainly she didn't survive those six years in Siberia, for he didn't get any news of her. There was a woman whose husband didn't return either. In those times people who lost their partner tried to find a new one. And when my sister Margit came back, he already had this partner. Later the woman's husband came back as well, and so the woman went back to her husband. My sister's husband went back to her, Margit took him back, what else was she supposed to do? A few years after the war, they emigrated to Israel. They had a daughter in Brasso, Zsuzsika. When they left, she was very little.

Margit was sewing all the time, she was sewing in Siberia as well, and after her return she was sewing in Brasso too, then in Israel. It was something unbelievable; we even used to say she had golden hands, because one can't imagine how well she could get on everywhere.

In Israel they lived in Haifa, they had a very nice apartment facing the sea. Her husband was the adventurer type. While they were together in Israel, he worked on a ship, but not as a sailor, he was some sort of employee there. The ship was sailing between Israel and Canada. He was a hotel manager, he was a kind of organizer. He was a restless man, he couldn't stay in an office. Otherwise he was quite a clever boy, just an adventurer.

One day he had this idea, and took my sister and the little girl to Canada, and told her, 'Stay here, because the family will have a better future here, and I will follow you.' My sister remained there with the child, and all she had so hardly saved in Israel, was gone, only so that Matyi could go to Canada, for he was this sort of man. And so my sister had to procure in Canada all she had left behind in Israel. And in order for them to get a residence permit in Canada, so that her husband could make a living there - it was all her who achieved this. And that with her bad leg and small child. Hers was a very hard lot, a very hard one.

Finally her husband emigrated as well; in Canada my sister already had a circle of clients, and until her husband could find an employment, she could support the family. Later her daughter got married. They didn't observe Jewish tradition much. Especially her husband, he wasn't religious at all. And it is so tragic that her husband died of cancer of the stomach; he is buried in the Jewish cemetery of Montreal, they bought a burial lot there. Margit was buried there too. Her daughter got married and divorced. Then she got married again, and her husband committed suicide.

Post-war

After the war it was very hard at the beginning here, in Marosvasarhely, because we didn't have a proper apartment. A cousin of mine, Hedike, who had come back before us, and had an apartment on Lajos Kossuth Street, accepted us in her place. Then we managed to obtain a room and a shared kitchen in the apartment of my brother, Joska. In the meantime Jeno came home as well. He escaped from work service and was hiding, he didn't go through all those terrible things we did. He tried to find an apartment, because the house where we lived wasn't ours, so that's how we got to Martuska [Marta] Lederer with Dorika and Jeno - that was the name of the owner of the house, later she became my brother's wife.

My uncle from Brasso, the husband of Aunt Lina was a manufacturer, they were very well-off. He owned an iron paste and shoe cream factory, they produced iron paste, shoe cream and parquet

cream. Uncle Jeno gave my brother Jeno a certain amount for him to open a shop, for he had learned trading, he had studied that in Brasso. And he opened a shop on Albina Square together with Dorika. This large shop was near the center, the house was owned by a Jew. The owner was Aunt Naftali, and she let out the premises to Jeno and Dorika.

Back then it was very hard to purchase goods, but Jeno acquired everything, from everywhere he could. He traveled to Braila, Galati, and purchased colonial goods: pepper, tea, coffee, lemon. These were all goods that one couldn't find in the whole town after the war. Many things were out of stock. There was stationery too, the iron paste, shoe cream, these were sent by my uncle; Jeno didn't have to pay for these. The shop was very prosperous. The two of them worked, sometimes I helped a little too, but I rather did the housekeeping, I was cooking, I bought everything at the market. This was my task, while they worked in the shop. After a couple of years the shop was thriving.

I had these two cousins, Hedike and Jenoke, who came back, and my uncle's wish was that we all had the same share of the income of this shop. It is true though that they didn't work in it, because everybody only took out its share, in turn I was doing the housekeeping, it was a task too. This cousin later became a bank clerk, so three of us were left. First we bought this house from the income. At the beginning we were four owners. My brother Andor was still a prisoner in Russia. Andor got home only after six years. So when he came home, we already had this house. It was settled that the house belonged to the four of us.

Then private commerce was prohibited - this was already during communism. The shop wasn't nationalized, but it had to be closed, it didn't make any profit at all. I don't know precisely when this was, but Jeno had already bought that storied house on Aron Marton Street, which was full with tenants. Thus Dorika and I stayed in this house, we always lived together. My brother Andor since he couldn't move to that other house, also lived with us here. In the meantime he got married; he had a room on the first floor and a small kitchen, and we shared the bathroom.

After we came home from deportation, I was in Brasso at my aunt's together with my cousin, Hedike; Dorika stayed here, in Marosvasarhely. Once a young man brought a message, I remembered him, for I had seen him once in Budapest, when we were coming home from deportation. I was surprised though when he called on my aunt's, but I don't know anymore the precise reason of his visit. He was a young man, my aunt Lina had a son and a daughter of the same age as he. We, the young gathered there, and Aunt Lina made sure we had a good time, we, who had gone through such awful things. Almost every night there was a great party, because it didn't matter to Aunt Lina, the house was spacious, they had their own beautiful big house in Brasso. I thought the young man came because of Hedike. Hedike was four years younger than me, she was a pretty, blond, very sweet girl with blue eyes. But it turned out that no.

When we came to Marosvasarhely from Brasso, one couldn't travel by train yet, so we got on a freight train. Aunt Lina gave us a carpet, a rug, and I don't know what else they gave us, but all this stuff wasn't in a suitcase; instead they made a big package. I don't know anymore what it was packed in, perhaps in some sort of linen. I sat down on this package in the train, and this young man, who was three years younger than me, wanted to sit next to me. And I noticed he was trying to hold my hands.

As we were sitting in the dark in that wagon, once some people came, I don't know if they were Russian soldiers or not. They flashed, and as the light disturbed us, we stood up frightened, and when I wanted to sit down again, there was nothing to sit on. These gangsters had stolen the present I had gotten from my aunt. There were many people who were burgled. From this moment this young man wouldn't let me alone from this moment, first to protect me, and later we became a couple. This relationship lasted for almost four years.

Then he started to study medicine. He passed the final exams, but he didn't try yet to enroll at university; he studied in a high school of commerce, and he had to pass a special exam, because you couldn't enroll at the University of Medicine unless you'd finished high school. He attended the high school of commerce in Marosvasarhely, he was a fellow student of my brother Andor's wife. We went together to the university; I don't know how I could spare time to go with him, when he went there for the first time to enter. There wasn't any entrance examination at the Bolyai University 18, one could simply enroll. He was a clever, nice boy, but he didn't suit me. First he didn't suit me because of the appearance, people said I was such a pretty girl, they couldn't imagine how I could get on so well with him, because he wasn't tall... Now I'm not so tall any more either, but back then I was a tall, pretty girl.

We used to gather at their house, I met the man who later became my husband at their house. Bagyi [my husband] was already a doctor, while my suitor was a young student, and he worked next to him in the institution. Thus Bagyi knew me for a long time. My suitor had only a father who survived, they came back from the war together. His sister came back later. We were on very good terms with her too. His father liked me a lot too, we gathered at their house many times, we had a great time. In those times people lived in order to forget, to recover somehow.

His father knew what a big income we had, that we could buy two houses, so he thought I was a good match. Once when he said his relatives would come from Brasso, and they were preparing, waiting for the relatives, I had a new dress, I put it on, it was a summer dress. I thought I would go to meet the relatives. But the reception was so cold. I felt I had no reason to stay there, and we left. From that day on I always thought I should put an end to this. But we couldn't break it up, because he was much attached to me, and so was I to him. Whoever came back and met somebody, they were stuck to each other. He had lost his mother, I had lost my parents. We could understand each other very well.

After that I kept on thinking and brooding about what to do, because Dorika was against this relationship from the very beginning: 'He doesn't suit you, a person of different age would suit you.' Then I went to Brasso, my sister Margit still lived in Brasso, they hadn't left for Israel yet. And they said they had an acquaintance they would like me to meet. They wanted to recommend a young man to me. But nothing came of it. My suitor couldn't have possibly found out when I was to come back to Marosvasarhely, but he did somehow and was waiting for me at the railway station. I could see his attachment to me.

Then we had a ball, the doctors' ball. His father and his sister, who was also studying, chose someone else for him. I found out. At the ball he was one of the organizers, he couldn't sit down much. I was sitting next to Bagyi, because he wasn't a great dancer, he was so serious. I wouldn't have thought something would come of it. My friend, who was the wife of a doctor, and she was an associate professor of pharmacology at the university, brought a bottle of fine liqueur, and we were

drinking, and if one drinks a little, one changes a little, opens up a little. I told my friend, 'Eva, we'll leave you alone now, we'll go to dance.' Of course Bagyi was such a steady character, so shy, not a sociable person at all... Then we danced, and I felt this certain obstinacy, for I hadn't come to the ball with him, but with the other guy, my suitor. Then I said now is the time, and we left the ball without my suitor noticing it.

Of course he was looking for me. My friend told him we were gone. Bagyi took me home. After a few days I went to the theater, and what do I see, both guys are there together and with company, and I was sitting in the stalls with a relative. When the performance was over, I came across him [Bagyi] at the cloakroom, and he asked me if he could take me home. We left, we took a long walk after the performance, and then he asked me whether he could visit us. 'Of course he could, I said.' At this moment I knew it was over with my suitor.

After the ball my former suitor called on my cousin, Hedike to ask her to mediate, so that we'd be reconciled, but there wasn't any chance for that anymore. The ball was in January, and at the end of March Bagyi told me that he had serious intentions, but he wanted to get to know me better first. So we got to know each other better over the next few months, and our relationship resulted in marriage. We got married in July. When we were walking together after the ball, he had said things like: 'It takes time to get to know a girl well.' Yet it was only a short time: from February to July. Then we got married, we had a civil wedding. We didn't have a religious wedding. There was a restaurant, the Elekes, we had dinner there; we organized a dinner there after the wedding.

I was at a ball only once in my life, in January 1949, and this ball determined my fate. It was decided there whom I should marry. I met my husband there, and he was my husband for almost sixty years - the marriage lasted fifty-seven years. It turned out later that he had been attracted to me from the very first moment. I had known him for four years before we got married. But he had a partner too at that time. We didn't have any family problems, just the religious difference. My previous relationship was with a Jew, and he was Christian. But his father didn't have any objections; this issue never came up at all.

Married life

My husband is from Kolozsvar, but he wasn't born in Kolozsvar, he was born in Magyarszarvaskend [in Romanian Cornesti]; it is somewhere near Kolozsvar, but I don't know where exactly. His father was a merchant. He was a Calvinist, his father was an active member of the church. He didn't have a mother, just a foster-mother, his mother died when he was twelve because of a surgical error.

His father didn't have any objections with regards to our marriage, but he had a younger brother, who said I didn't suit him. I don't know why he said that, for he didn't even know me, he didn't have any grounds for having an opinion on me or forming an image on what kind of person I was. He only knew his brother was such a reserved person, and whoever changes that, must be a cunning person. His brother told him, 'Take care of yourself, not to get into the clutches of a cunning woman.' Well, I was that cunning woman; we lived together for almost sixty years, and I nursed him and took care of him. I was a good and caring wife, at least I think I was.

My husband's brother was called Tibor; he had two degrees, he finished the University of Economics and the military academy. He was a pilot, he lived in Kolozsvar. He had a family, but his family life was obscure. One of the brothers was a quiet boy, the other a womanizer.

My husband moved here, but when we bought the house, it hadn't been empty. A Jewish family lived on the upper floor, and they left for Israel. Back then if somebody passed an apartment to somebody, they got key money for the apartment in order to give it up. But this Jewish family didn't ask anything for letting us move in. They gave us the upper part, and below a widow lived with her daughter. Then the daughter got married, and the old woman was left alone, downstairs in the two rooms. And she gave us on her own choice one room, the room which was facing the yard, and she kept the bigger room. But we couldn't get that one room; we asked the old lady, we offered her money to move to her daughter, but we couldn't convince her. It was hard to get the entire house, in order to own the whole place. We had so many meetings and talks and everything, my husband went to the housing department many times. So it was very hard, but finally we did get the house.

My husband was called up, and he was in the army for twenty months. During this period I let out the room to Sanyi [Sandor] Ausch, who is now the president of the Jewish community. In the meantime Sanyi Ausch got married and moved. My husband was still gone, and I didn't have any income, and I was pregnant. After the Ausch family left, I let it out to a young couple, he was a doctor and I also knew him.

In the meantime Juditka was born. My husband came home after twenty months. Juditka called him Bagyi, she didn't call him daddy. During all that long time while he was a soldier, he had leave only once; he did his service in Fogaras. They paid him nothing, and recognized nothing, he was a regular. They gave him only a few lei for pay. By that time Andor moved from here as well.

During this time Dorika helped us. She didn't have any actual qualification in commerce, but she was an extremely clever, capable person. I wasn't as resourceful as my sisters, who opened a sewing workshop, and the others, the boys; I was the youngest, and I was spoiled too a little.

Dorika applied for a job, because they wanted a chief bookkeeper at the public health institution. She didn't have any qualification in accounting, but she accepted the job. Such courage! She took on the chief bookkeeper's job at such an institution... And not only that she could cope with it, but we always had friends who were bookkeepers she could discuss certain issues with. Then she was rewarded, she was the first one from all the public health institutions in the country. She was given a reward, a diploma, and her name was mentioned in a specialist journal, where they praised her.

She didn't get married. She dedicated all her life, as she left school, to her family, to save my father's honor. When she took on this job at the public health institution, it wasn't easy, she had to go there early in the morning; most often she didn't take a bus, but walked all the way. I think the way there was three kilometers, and she walked in summer and in winter, when it was freezing. Then a ministerial act dissolved all the public health institutions [reorganizations were carried out] in all Romania.

Her next job was at the Sanepid, she was chief accountant there [Editor's note: Sanepid - the name of the Romanian public health institution]. They elbowed her out of there. Then she was chief accountant at the Red Cross, where her boss was a vicious man. He gave her such a hard time that she developed heart problems. By the time she could retire, her health had already deteriorated. We were together to the very end in Marosvasarhely, she died in 1991 at the age of eighty-two. She is buried in the Jewish cemetery, and my brother Andor is buried there too.

My husband [Andras Fazekas] was a doctor, a cytopathologist. At the beginning, when I met him, he was a pathologist. But there too a political matter intervened, reorganization was carried out. Back then he worked there, at the pathological department, but he was kicked out. Our children were still little then. He was transferred to Csikszereda [in Romanian Miercurea Ciuc]. But Csikszereda is far, and Dorika, who already worked in public health, had connections, she was a known person, and she managed to arrange that he would be placed not in Csikszereda, but in Szaszregen [in Romanian Reghin]. And in Szaszregen he took on the job in the hospital, but he worked there not in his profession, but as a general practitioner.

My husband worked three years in Szaszregen; he left on Monday, and came home on Saturday. In those times people worked on Saturdays as well. But it even happened that he couldn't come home. He lived with a Jewish family - he chose a Jewish family, because he was already part of a Jewish family - but he had a room that wasn't heated. He caught a bad cold, and after that he didn't hear well.

Finally he could come back from Szaszregen to Marosvasarhely somehow; with difficulties, but in the end we succeeded. Yet they had no job at the pathology, there wasn't a vacancy, he couldn't go back there, but to the internal medicine department. Due to these three years he had spent in Szaszregen his hearing deteriorated so much that he couldn't examine and listen to patients anymore. Then he had to leave his job at the internal medicine department, and in order to avoid unemployment, he took on a district doctor's job. He was sensitive already. He used to go to the office by bike; there were only a few cars back then, and he had a cold, he was ill again, and finally he couldn't do that job either. He wasn't able to due to his physical condition. He was ill many times.

Somehow, I don't know how, there was a vacancy at the pathology. He went back, but to a position where one starts the profession from. He should have been an assistant lecturer already, but these things intervened, Szaszregen, then the internal medicine department, after that drifting as a district doctor. Well, in fact he was broke. And he got back to such a job within his original profession, where he had the smallest salary; yet we were pleased with that nonetheless. And I had a support, because Dorika assisted us like a mother. So somehow we could get on. I didn't have any job, I didn't have to work, because Dori always helped us, so from this point of view we were all right; she adored our children.

My husband could have undergone a head physician exam; he was supposed to take the exam in Bucharest, but he wasn't accepted. Little was missing enabling him to go, some trifling, maybe two months of experience in the field, but because of this he couldn't go to take the exam. And after this last exam they announced a head physician exam only eight years later. And until then we lived on that small salary. Finally he took the head physician exam. Thus he became a histologist in the histological laboratory. When he was dissecting bodies, he had to find out why the person had died. He was doing this for a few years, then he was setting up diagnoses in the laboratory. He had a hard job, because it implies responsibility; for example if they cut out a piece of a woman's breast to establish whether she had a benign or a malignant tumor, he had to decide about it. And he made not one mistake. He was an acknowledged specialist.

He worked until the age of seventy-two, because they didn't let him retire. He was the head physician of the institution. He left in the morning, and came home at ten, half past ten in the

evening. For besides he was conscientious, he was never mistaken; it never happened that he made a wrong diagnosis... He worked all the time. I couldn't tell anymore for how many years we could enjoy the head physician's salary, but certainly not for many years. He worked until the age of seventy-two, though he could have retired earlier.

We got married in 1949, and in 1950 Juditka [Judit] was born, in 1955 Evike [Eva]. Juditka was the best child one could imagine. There was quite a big difference of age between the two children. I gave birth to Juditka when I was thirty. When we got married, my husband said that he wanted three children, but since my second child was born when I was already thirty- five, I was out of time, so we dropped the idea of a third child.

Both children started school in the Papiu [high school]; at that time it was a mixed school, girls attended it too at the beginning. Then they finished school in the Unirea [high school]. Both went to a Romanian school. They studied well, both of them. Juditka, my elder daughter, enrolled at the University of Timber Industry in Brasso, while Evike, the younger one, studied at the University of Medicine, and my husband was delighted with it, because she pursued his profession. He adored that girl so much, it's beyond description.

Evike didn't have any problems at university; she was accepted following the first entrance examination. Her husband was her classmate, he is called Albert Frank, he was born in Nagykaroly [in Romanian Carei], his father was a doctor. He is a very good boy, a very good husband. They have two children. The elder is Ivonne; we didn't hesitate about this name, because we had liked it before. I was glad too that they gave her this name. Their second child is Clara; I like this name as well. I love my grandchildren very much.

Jutka too met her husband at university. He is called Ferenc Incze. He was born in Brasso, his mother is also from Brasso, and his father was born in Zagon [in Romanian Zagon], but lived in Brasso. Juditka was very pretty, she looked like Sophia Loren, she resembled that actress a lot. During her university studies her colleagues called her Sophika. Later, in 1974 Feri [Ferenc] went to Croatia on a students' journey, and he and a Romanian colleague didn't come home. They got to Austria. There they first had a provisional residence, until they clarified their identity. Since Feri could certify his German origins - his mother had German origins - he could go to Germany.

After Feri left, Juditka got to Zilah [in Romanian Zalau]. According to those times' practice she got to Zilah following placement [Editor's note: meaning that after finishing her studies she was compelled to take on that precise job]. But she wasn't there for long, because she wanted to come to Marosvasarhely, and she applied for a teacher's job in Marosvasarhely, at the school of timber industry. She did get it; we were very happy that she was home, and she wasn't so far and alone any more.

In those times relationships were of course censored. The letters which came from Germany, and those which were sent there, were censored, because we noticed a very little sign, which appeared on every envelope. One could see two lines, the same appeared on the envelopes. It wasn't striking, yet we discovered it. This correspondence lasted for five years. We received each letter.

Later Feri came home from Germany, and they had their civil wedding here. He was her fiancé all the time, he left as her fiancé. Juditka had a ring, it was a small silver ring, and a little heart on a chain hanging on it. Five years passed, and they had to wait a few months after the wedding, until

they let Juditka go. The children of Judit were born there, in Germany. I was there at the birth of both children. Peter, the elder boy is twenty-seven years old, Andras is twenty-five.

It was quite complicated for Evike and her family to leave. Judit was already in Germany, but Evike and her husband couldn't just simply go to Germany. However, Evike, her mother being a Jew, could apply for going to Israel. First they studied Hebrew here, in Marosvasarhely. There was a lawyer here, who spoke the language well, and he accepted to teach them. They had to wait; they submitted the application for emigration, and of course the Securitate 19 kept under surveillance those who applied for emigration. I don't know after how much time they got the permit to go to Israel.

It was a very painful parting, because her elder daughter, Ivonne, was born here. They lived with us until the end, in the room which faces the yard, and they had the small room, the bathroom and the kitchen. Dorika, my poor sister was already retired, and after retirement it was her who cooked. I bought everything, I helped them, but in fact we did it together. The little girl, Ivonne was two and a half years old, she was a very sweet, nice little girl, she could already speak clearly.

They traveled to Bucharest by train, in a sleeping-car, and they flew to Israel from there. There they stayed with a relative. That family, poor them, lived in a small apartment, and they had two little children as well. When they arrived, they couldn't yet go to my cousin, because it was already organized that they would immediately be sent to a Hebrew language course, to the ulpan 20. And they would have given them lodging and everything there. They said they wouldn't go to the ulpan, because they wouldn't stay in Israel.

They chose Germany, because the brother of Albi's [the son-in-law's] mother lived there with his family. They had been living there for a long time. Well, it didn't result in a scandal, but there was something... The matter dragged on for quite a long time in Israel, but finally they let them go. However, they assumed the obligation to repay Israel the expenses, because Israel paid for every person who emigrated there. They paid a considerable amount for a person Ceausescu 21 let go. I don't know what the exact amount was; Albi's uncle refunded the money for Israel, and thus they let them go. [Editor's note: Israel and Germany paid a certain amount to Romania for each emigrant. This amount was established on the basis of the emigrant's qualification and the position they had in Romania. They had to pay more for a person who had a university degree, than for a person who finished a professional school. From the end of the 1960s it cost Israel 3000 USD on average to 'buy' a Romanian Jew.]

They attended a language course in Germany for one year, and they got some aid too from the Germans, from the very beginning. First both Albi and Evike worked in a hospital. Evike got a job in a hospital for plastic surgery, and Albi in a medical department. Finally he became a radiologist. Ivonne will be twenty-five this November, and Clarika turned seventeen in May.

I was there when Clarika was born too. Dorika was such a helpful person; I've realized this by now, but back then I didn't even think of it - even if it was only for three months, for passports were issued for a period of three months. However, if they'd have given me a passport for five or six months, she would have said, 'Go, be with your children' as well. Back then I didn't think it was a huge sacrifice. But my poor sister could have spent her time somewhere else too...

I didn't have problems with the authorities, I always got my passport. I visited my daughters alone. My husband was working, so we never went to Germany together. Dorika was in Germany once; she visited both Evike's and Juditka's family. From Germany Juditka and her family came home visiting, because the parents of Feri lived in Brasso, so it was rather them who'd come.

In 1968 I was in Paris with Dorika; we met our cousin Andor, who lived in France. In 1977 Dorika and I went to Israel, where we met Margit, who came there from Canada. We visited together the relatives, we went on a lot of trips together. My husband and I were only on ONT excursions [that is, organized by the Oficiul National de Turism/The National Tourism Department] together. We traveled to Russia, I was there once, but he was there once more alone, in Leningrad. When we were there together, we visited Moscow, Siberia, we saw Lake Baikal. There in Siberia the Amur River borders it from China, on the other side it's China, we traveled that far. And we were in the taiga, it was a very exciting trip, and we had very good company, mainly colleagues, professors from the university. It was very nice.

My husband adored nature, and I liked it too, I liked it a lot. I enjoyed gardening, things like that, and we ventured out into nature a lot. To the Fogarasi [Fagarasi] Mountains for example, so these weren't short outings, I wasn't fit for them, but I had to go with him, because he wouldn't have gone alone. And when Juditka was big enough to be able to go, then we took her for the first time to the Fogarasi Mountains, and when Evike grew up too, when she was around thirteen, we went there again. Yet I was quite old already, almost fifty. We were in the Retyezat [Retezat] Mountains, the Western Carpathians, the Bucegi Mountains, in Brasso on the Cenk Peak.

We observed Christian holidays too, Easter, but my husband didn't go to church. He wasn't religious at all, he was a Calvinist. His father was a believer who observed religion, but my husband wasn't religious. From the point of view of what religion I had or he had we didn't have problems.

We always had a Christmas tree. Without Dorika we would have had nothing under the tree. For I wasn't that kind of character, I've never liked shopping, and I've remained like this down to the present day. If she hadn't pressed me, 'Let's go and buy you a pair of shoes', I'd have never bought one myself. In Germany too Evike took me by force to a shopping center. I didn't like it, I was always like this, and I haven't changed in that respect.

I am a member of the Jewish community even today, ever since I moved to Marosvasarhely. I registered my husband at the Calvinist church, so that he would be a member of the church too, for when he must be buried, he would be included in the records, as member of the Calvinist church. We paid the church fee there, and I pay the Jewish community even today. My brother, Andor, may he rest in peace, always paid the community tax for me too. Evike told me, 'Even if you leave, remain a member of the community.' We contributed to the installation of the Holocaust statue. We donated, both Evike and I did. I don't know whether Juditka donated something, but I know for sure we gave them German marks.

At Pesach we didn't prepare any Jewish food, but we used to buy matzah from the community. We didn't prepare those Pesach meals we had had at my parents'. We made chulent, which we liked a lot. Moreover, my two daughters make it even today, the children like it a lot, and the men like it too, I mean Evike's husband likes it, and Feri likes it as well.

Hedike gave me two candlesticks; she gave them to me with the request: 'You should light candles each Friday night.' But I didn't practice this; I didn't light candles on Friday evening. I prayed only in the synagogue, when we recited the 'mazkir' [yizkor], this is a prayer for the departed recited in the synagogue. Each year I prayed only for my parents. I recited only the 'mazkir,' which I said for my parents; we weren't particularly religious. And since I had a mixed marriage, we observed holidays meaning that we prepared festive meals, but my husband didn't go to church.

I went to the synagogue to services only on high holidays, with Dorika, on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. On Yom Kippur Dorika and I were fasting, I always lit candles on these holidays, two candles in the Sabbath candlestick. And I observed fasting until I turned eighty.

Dorika died suddenly. She liked the 'Teleenciclopedia' very much, it was always on Saturday. [Editor's note: The program Teleenciclopedia presenting issues of natural science, technology and health has been broadcasted by Romanian Television 1 since 1965 on each Saturday afternoon, at six.] On Saturday afternoon we were sitting on the balcony, we had a small table there with two chairs, and we were cleaning currants picked by my husband that day. Dorika told me we would never do this again on Saturday, that this was for the last time we were doing this. It was for the last time for my poor sister indeed... She went in to watch the 'Teleenciclopedia,' she invited me to join her, and all of a sudden she says, 'Oh, I feel so bad.' My husband was in the bathroom. And by the time he came out, she was dead, she had died in my arms, I never saw anyone dying before. It was terrible.

Dorika died in 1991. I had a breakdown then. I went to Germany to see my daughters, but I wouldn't have thought that... My brothers and his daughter- in-law undertook to look after my husband so that I could go to my children. He could provide for breakfast and supper for himself. It turned out what illness he had, when he wanted to put out a ficus on the balcony. He lifted up that heavy pot, and his vertebrae cracked, and three of his ribs broke. For these bones were already full of tumors...

We left for Germany in 1995; Evike offered that we could stay with them, and they would look after my husband. How interesting is faith, for a girl was born back then, not a boy - though he [Magda Fazekas's husband] would have liked a boy - and this girl turned out to be his caring keeper for years. Once we even told him, 'You see how faith is, for a girl was born, so that you can have a peaceful old age, you don't have to worry about anything, you can watch TV and read the newspaper peacefully' - She brought him the four biggest newspapers published in Germany every week.

I took care of my husband for fourteen years. He died in August 2006 in Regenstauf; his urn is placed in the family tomb in the Hazsongard cemetery in Kolozsvar. I sat a lot with him in those last years of his life, the problem was that he could not hear, he had problems with his hearing for a very long time, he had fallen sick back then in Szaszregen, and he became deaf gradually. It was very hard to talk to him. In the last years, if he couldn't understand what I said by watching my lips, I wrote him down what I wanted to say, and him answering wasn't a problem, and that's how we could talk.

While he was still alive, I led my life next to him, and we watched all kind of programs on TV. For example he didn't enjoy these lighter movies and musical programs. I liked operetta, I liked nice and spectacular things, which he didn't like at all, it even made him a little nervous, yet sometimes

he watched a little of it. He was interested in sports. He was very much interested in it. He went in for sports a lot when he was young, he played tennis, volleyball, he swam, and he liked watching sports on TV. He had a passion for tennis. We knew these famous tennis players, as if they belonged to us; each of us had a favorite.

When ten years ago we came home to Marosvasarhely with Juditka, she was driving across four countries; I still remember how exciting it was. We wanted to go then to Gyergyotolgyes, because Hedike came with me, my cousin who is from Gyergyotolgyes. Now Hedike lives in Germany, she is eighty years old. We decided to go to see Hedike's house, and to go to the cemetery as well, to see after so many years the cemetery in Gyergyotolgyes, where my grandparents, my father's parents are buried. That's what we wanted. But finally it was bad weather or what, and we didn't go. I'm so sorry for that, I had the opportunity to go to Gyergyotolgyes for the third time in my life. I could have gone to look for my grandparents' grave. I regret it a lot. Now I can't go to Gyergyotolgyes anymore, that's certain.

It is rather Juditka who had something of a Jewish identity, Evike doesn't really. In fact my children always knew they were of Jewish origin on their mother's side. For example I told Clarika [Evike's daughter] about the Holocaust when she was fifteen. I didn't tell the elder girl anything about this, because I had a completely different relationship with the elder, Ivonne, than with the little one. When we moved to them, she was a teenager, and she wasn't interested in it. Little Clarika was five years old when we emigrated, and she grew up next to us.

I didn't relate anything to these elder children. Not to Evike and Juditka, my daughters. What they found out, they learned from somebody else. I didn't tell them. I didn't want to. I told Clarika because she hadn't yet been taken to such a place. For you see, German children are taken to visit Auschwitz, Dachau 22. Evike's family lives in Bavaria, children are taken to concentration camps which are nearby. Clarika was that type in general, that she enjoyed my company. So I told her stories, and she told me, 'Now, if they take me to such a place in school, I will see it completely differently than the other children.'

I have to tell you, people reprove me for this all the time, I suffer from pathological insomnia. Ever since we came home from deportation, I haven't been able to sleep. I get up at least five or six times during the night, and I suffer. This was the same when I was younger, in my marital life, too, and I didn't sleep in the same room as my husband, because I can't sleep, and I always used to get up. Therefore we used to sleep in different beds. Well, my mother-in-law couldn't understand this. She said: 'How can you do such a thing, not to sleep next to your husband!' Well, I told her, 'how can I possibly sleep next to him, when I have to get up all the time; he has work to do, and this way he can't rest.'

I have restless nights, I get up in the morning, I compose myself, and after breakfast - in Germany, when we stayed at Evike's, I did the same - I used to walk up and down on the balcony. At the beginning, when my husband was well enough to be able to come out for a walk, we walked together a little. This was my schedule. I used to help my daughter, I did the cooking. I cooked lunch, then I lay down a little in the afternoon, but I didn't dare to sleep long, because I may not be able to sleep at night if I lay down a little in the afternoon. This was my schedule.

Now at Juditka's my schedule is the same, I help her too by preparing lunch, because Juditka likes me to make lunch, and I also enjoy making order in the kitchen. I never had talent for anything

else, to do needlework, like other old people, who knit, sew or embroider. But all my siblings were like that... Besides being so clever, resourceful and capable, Dorika did very nice needlework, just like my mother. Now, since I've been here at Juditka's, I'm very much alone, because they are so busy. I can see this, and I try to bother them as little as possible. I withdraw, I watch the Duna Television; I like popular science programs a lot.

It's interesting, I never made false fish, since I've been here in Germany. When we visited Regensburg with Evike, they live near Regensburg, we went to buy matzah at the local Jewish community. They were just preparing for Pesach. The door was open, and we looked in, and we saw the laid table in the assembly room... And they had prepared false fish for starter.

The first bar mitzvah I saw in my life was in Germany. In Obersulm, where I live with my daughter Judit there aren't any Jews. But in a neighboring place, Affaltrach, there is a synagogue, well what is left of it; they didn't demolish it, when during the Kristallnacht 23 all the synagogues were demolished and set on fire. The farm-buildings were near, and they were afraid the fire would spread, and everything would burn down, so they didn't destroy it. However, they robbed this synagogue as well.

Twenty years ago an association was established in order to save the synagogue: 'Freundeskreis ehemalige Synagoge Affaltrach' that means the Society of the Former Synagogue of Affaltrach... My daughter is a member of this association too. They restored it and renovated it nicely as it was, but they don't use it for keeping services in it, for there isn't any Jew or rabbi, but only a museum, and they organize concerts there. I was four times at concerts in this synagogue. There is a German Lutheran priest, Helmut Krause, he's the president of the association, and he's always there when they perform a concert. My daughter undertakes duties at the museum; everybody is a volunteer there.

Recently, in spring 2007 the last event was a bar mitzvah; the parents brought the child there from Stuttgart. This bar mitzvah was the first religious event, since the synagogue was restored. The parents are in fact from America, and the father does his military service as a soldier in Germany. The rabbi who conducted the service also came from America. It was a very interesting event. Unfortunately I didn't understand a word of it, because he was praying in Hebrew, but in between he was also explaining to the public, which was mostly American. The father was a soldier, so soldiers came too, colored people as well, it was very interesting. They also came with their families, if they had a wife, then with her, and if they had children, they brought them too. It wasn't arranged for men to be on the ground floor and women up in the gallery, everybody mingled. We went up to the gallery only because we could see the ceremony better from there.

These American soldiers have everything: school, hospital. The Hebrew teacher of the soldiers who are on duty in Stuttgart was a woman, and she assisted the rabbi during the service. I watched this from the gallery with my daughter, but the only sad thing was that I couldn't understand even what they explained, because they did so in English. They translated it into German too to make people understand what bar mitzvah was for, what its meaning was. Though it was a very long ceremony, it was worth to see. They prayed, then they took out the Torah, they opened the scroll, and he read certain parts of the Torah. Next to the rabbi there was all the time the child, the parents too, and the two girls, his two sisters. So this whole thing was very interesting.

Glossary

1 Anti-Jewish laws in Hungary

Following similar legislation in Nazi Germany, Hungary enacted three Jewish laws in 1938, 1939 and 1941. The first law restricted the number of Jews in industrial and commercial enterprises, banks and in certain occupations, such as legal, medical and engineering professions, and journalism to 20% of the total number. This law defined Jews on the basis of their religion, so those who converted before the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1919, as well as those who fought in World War I, and their widows and orphans were exempted from the law. The second Jewish law introduced further restrictions, limiting the number of Jews in the above fields to 6%, prohibiting the employment of Jews completely in certain professions such as high school and university teaching, civil and municipal services, etc. It also forbade Jews to buy or sell land and so forth. This law already defined Jews on more racial grounds in that it regarded baptized children that had at least one non- converted Jewish parent as Jewish. The third Jewish law prohibited intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews, and defined anyone who had at least one Jewish grandparent as Jewish.

2 Second Vienna Dictate

The Romanian and Hungarian governments carried on negotiations about the territorial partition of Transylvania in August 1940. Due to their conflict of interests, the negotiations turned out to be fruitless. In order to avoid violent conflict a German-Italian court of arbitration was set up, following Hitler's directives, which was also accepted by the parties. The verdict was pronounced on 30th August 1940 in Vienna: Hungary got back a territory of 43,000 sq.km. with 2.5 million inhabitants. This territory (Northern Transylvania, Seklerland) was populated mainly by Hungarians (52 percent according to the Hungarian census and 38 percent according to the Romanian one) but at the same time more than 1 million Romanians got under the authority of Hungary. Although Romania had 19 days for capitulation, the Hungarian troops entered Transylvania on 5th September. The verdict was disapproved by several Western European countries and the US; the UK considered it a forced dictate and refused to recognize its validity.

3 Trianon Peace Treaty

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

4 Tarbut Jewish Lyceum

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

5 Tolstoy, Lev Nikolayevich (1828-1910)

Russian novelist and moral philosopher, who holds an important place in his country's cultural history as an ethical philosopher and religious reformer. Tolstoy, alongside Dostoyevsky, made the realistic novel a literary genre, ranking in importance with classical Greek tragedy and Elizabethan drama. He is best known for his novels, including War and Peace, Anna Karenina and The Death of Ivan Ilyich, but also wrote short stories and essays and plays. Tolstoy took part in the Crimean War and his stories based one the defense of Sevastopol, known as Sevastopol Sketches, made him famous and opened St. Petersburg's literary circles to him. His main interest lay in working out his religious and philosophical ideas. He condemned capitalism and private property and was a fearless critic, which finally resulted in his excommunication from the Russian Orthodox Church in 1901. His views regarding the evil of private property gradually estranged him from his wife, Yasnaya Polyana, and children, except for his daughter Alexandra, and he finally left them in 1910. He died on his way to a monastery at the railway junction of Astapovo.

6 Dostoevsky, Fyodor (1821-1881)

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

7 Romanian educational policy between the two World Wars

One of the main directions of the Romanian educational policy in the period between the two World Wars was the dissimilation of Transylvanian Jews. Romanian was declared the only language of state education (1928/Monitorul Oficial nr. 105). In special cases (in cities where national minorities made up the majority of the inhabitants) the establishment of sections in the language of minorities was allowed. The ecclesiastical schools had no right anymore to accept the enrollment of students belonging to other religions. Hebrew and Romanian became the only permissible languages of Jewish high school education starting in 1925 (1925/Monitorul Oficial 283,36). The university system allowed the access of Jews until 1938, but the violent actions of the Iron Guard made their attendance technically impossible.

8 Iron Guard

Extreme right wing political organization in Romania between 1930 and 1941, led by C. Z. Codreanu. The Iron Guard propagated nationalist, Christian-mystical and anti-Semitic views. It was banned for its terrorist activities (e.g. the murder of Romanian Prime Minister I. Gh. Duca) in 1933. In 1935 it was re-established as a party named Totul pentru Tara, 'Everything for the Fatherland', but it was banned again in 1938. It was part of the government in the first period of the Antonescu regime, but it was then banned and dissolved as a result of the unsuccessful coup d'état of January 1941. Its leaders escaped abroad to the Third Reich.

9 Transylvania

Geographical and historical region belonging to Hungary until 1918-19, then ceded to Romania. Its area covers 103,000 sq.km between the Carpathian Mountains and the present-day Hungarian and Serbian borders. It became a Roman province in the 2nd century (AD) terminating the Dacian Kingdom. After the Roman withdrawal it was overrun, between the 3rd and 10th centuries, by the Goths, the Huns, the Gepidae, the Avars and the Slavs. Hungarian tribes first entered the region in the 5th century, but they did not fully control it until 1003, when King Stephen I placed it under jurisdiction of the Hungarian Crown. Later, in the 12th and 13th centuries, Germans, called Saxons (then and now), also arrived while Romanians, called Vlachs or Walachians, were there by that time too, although the exact date of their appearance is disputed. As a result of the Turkish conquest, Hungary was divided into 3 sections: West Hungary, under Habsburg rule, central Hungary, under Turkish rule, and semi-independent Transylvania (as a Principality), where Austrian and Turkish influences competed for supremacy for nearly two centuries. With the defeat of the Turkish Transylvania gradually came under Habsburg rule, and due to the Compromise of 1867 it became an integral part of Hungary again. In line with other huge territorial losses fixed in the Treaty of Trianon (1920), Transylvania was formally ceded to Romania by Hungary. For a short period during WWII it was returned to Hungary but was ceded to Romania once again after the war. Many of the Saxons of Transylvania fled to Germany before the arrival of the Soviet army, and more followed after the fall of the Communist government in 1989. In 1920, the population of Erdély was 5,200,000, of which 3 million were Romanian, 1,400,000 Hungarian (26%), 510,000 German and 180,000 Jewish. In 2002, however, the percentage of Hungarians was only 19.6% and the German and Jewish population decreased to several thousand. Despite the decrease of the Hungarian, German and Jewish element, Transylvania still preserves some of its multiethnic and multi-confessional tradition.

10 Forced labor [Labor/Working Battalion]

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. A decree in 1941 unified the arrangement, saying that the Jews were 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 6-7,000 returned.

11 Yellow star in Hungary

In a decree introduced on 31st March 1944 the Sztojay government obliged all persons older than 6 years qualified as Jews, according to the relevant laws, to wear, starting from 5th April, "outside the house" a 10x10 cm, canary yellow colored star made of textile, silk or velvet, sewed onto the left side of their clothes. The government of Dome Sztojay, appointed due to the German invasion, emitted dozens of decrees aiming at the separation, isolation and despoilment of the Jewish population, all this preparing and facilitating deportation. These decrees prohibited persons qualified as Jews from owning and using telephones, radios, cars, and from changing domicile. They prohibited the employment of non-Jewish persons in households qualified as Jewish, ordered the dismissal of public employees qualified as Jews, and introduced many other restrictions and prohibitions. The obligation to wear a yellow star aimed at the visible distinction of persons qualified as Jews, and made possible from the beginning abuses by the police and gendarmes. A few categories were exempted from this obligation: WWI invalids and awarded veterans, respectively following the pressure of the Christian Church priests, the widows and orphans of awarded WWI heroes, WWII orphans and widows, converted Jews married to a Christian and foreigners. (Randolph L. Braham: A nepirtas politikaja, A holokauszt Magyarorszagon / The Politics of Genocide, The Holocaust in Hungary, Budapest, Uj Mandatum, 2003, p. 89-90.)

12 Exemption from Deportation in North Transylvania

In March 1944, the Germans occupied Hungary and North Transylvania. After the occupation, the openly Nazi-friendly and anti-Semitic Dome Sztojay formed a government, and a series of anti-Jewish laws were introduced. The law for ghettoization of Hungarian Jewry made exceptions in certain cases. The sphere of exemptions was defined in a decree on 10th May 1945. The widows and children of those Jews who received a high commendation for bravery in World War I, or those widows and children of Jews who disappeared or died a hero's death in World War II as soldiers (not during 'work service' in the Labor Battalions) were exempted. Foreign Jewish citizens living in Hungary were also an exception. There were other modes of escaping deportation. Rezso Kasztner, Zionist leader from Kolozsvar, exemplified this when he secured the release of 1300 Hungarian Jews (250 of which were Kolozsvar families) as a result of negotiations with Adolf Eichmann. The North-Transylvanian Jews' other means of escape was to flee to Romania, and hide there with Christian help. Three doctors played a major role in hiding Kolozsvar Jews: Imre Haynal, Dezso Klimko and Dezso Miskolczy, offering help through their exaggerated diagnoses and extra-extended treatments. In spring 1944, the clinic of Imre Haynal hid and sheltered a number of Jews, the greater part of his 'intensive care' ward were Jews fleeing deportation, since the expulsion of the seriously ill was often overlooked by the authorities.

13 Birkenau (Pol

: Brzezinka): Also known as Auschwitz II. Set up in October 1941 following a decision by Heinrich Himmler in the village of Brzezinka (Ger.: Birkenau) close to Auschwitz, as a prisoner-of-war camp. It retained this title until March 1944, although it was never used as a POW camp. It comprised sectors of wooden sheds for different types of prisoners (women, men, Jewish families from

Terezin, Roma, etc.), and continued to be expanded until the end of 1943. From the beginning of 1942 it was an extermination camp. The Birkenau camp covered a total area of 140 ha and comprised some 300 sheds variously used as living quarters, ancillary quarters and crematoria. Birkenau, Auschwitz I and scores of satellite camps made up the largest center for extermination of the Jews. The majority of the Jews deported here were sent straight to the gas chambers to be put to death immediately, without registration. There were 400,000 prisoners registered there for longer periods, half of whom were Jews. The second-largest group of prisoners were Poles (140,000). Prisoners died en mass as a result of slave labor, starvation, the inhuman living conditions, beatings, torture and executions. The bodies of those murdered were initially buried and later burned in the crematoria and on pyres in specially dug pits. Due to the efforts made by the SS to erase the evidence of their crimes and their destruction of the majority of the documentation on the prisoners, and also to the fact that the Soviet forces seized the remaining documentation, it is impossible to establish the exact number of victims of Auschwitz-Birkenau. On the basis of the fragmentary documentation available, it can be assumed that in total approx. 1.5 million prisoners were murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau, some 90% of who were Jews.

14 Ravensbrück

Concentration camp for women near Fürstenberg, Germany. Five hundred prisoners transported there from Sachsenhausen began construction at the end of 1938. They built 14 barracks and service buildings, as well as a small camp for men, which was completed separated from the women's camp. The buildings were surrounded by tall walls and electrified barbed wire. The first deportees, some 900 German and Austrian women were transported there on 18th May 1939, soon followed by 400 Austrian Gypsy women. At the end of 1939, due to the new groups constantly arriving, the camp held nearly 3000 persons. With the expansion of the war, people from twenty countries were taken here. Persons incapable of working were transported on to Uckermark or Auschwitz, and sent to the gas chambers, others were murdered during 'medical' experiments. By the end of 1942, the camp reached 15,000 prisoners, by 1943, with the arrival of groups from the Soviet Union, it reached 42,000. During the working existence of the camp, altogether nearly 132,000 women and children were transported here, of these, 92,000 were murdered. In March of 1945, the SS decided to move the camp, so in April those capable of walking were deported on a death march. On 30th April 1945, those who survived the camp and death march, were liberated by the Soviet armies.

15 Horthy, Miklos (1868-1957)

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

16 Buchenwald

One of the largest concentration camps in Germany, located five miles north of the city of Weimar. It was founded on 16th July, 1937 and liberated on 11th April, 1945. During its existence 238,980 prisoners from 30 countries passed through Buchenwald. Of those, 43,045 were killed.

17 Wehrmacht (German Armed Forces)

Between 1935 and 1945, Wehrmacht was the official name of the German Army, which consisted of land, naval and air forces. Apart from the soldiers of the Wehrmacht, the members of the Waffen-SS also participated in actions during WWII. The Waffen-SS grew out of the paramilitary SS (Schutzstaffel = 'protective echelon') established by Hitler as a personal bodyguard in 1925. Placed under the Wehrmacht, however, the Waffen-SS participated in battles from 1939. Its elite units committed massacres at Oradour, Malmedy, Le Paradis and elsewhere.

18 Babes-Bolyai University of Kolozsvar (Cluj Napoca)

The Babes-Bolyai University was set up in 1958 by the fusion of two state universities, the Hungarian Bolyai University and the Romanian Babes University. The predecessor of the Bolyai University, called Ferenc Jozsef University and founded in 1872, moved to Szeged after the Trianon Peace Treaty (1920). In 1919 the University of Cluj was declared a Romanian university by an executive decree of the new Governing Council of Transylvania and it was named after the Romanian King, Ferdinand I. After Transylvania's annexation to Hungary (1940) the Ferdinand University fled to Sibiu and the university buildings in Cluj got back under the rule of the returning Ferenc Jozsef University. In 1945 Transylvania was enclosed to Romania, the Romanian University returned to Cluj, and the negotiation began for the buildings and laboratories. Since 1945 the Hungarian university has been called Bolyai, and the Romanian one Babes, after the famous Romanian researcher Victor Babes. In the 1950s the Bolyai University was gradually degraded by reducing the number of its faculties, students and teachers. The last phase of this process was the fusion of the two institutions.

19 Securitate

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

20 Ulpan

Word in Hebrew that designates teaching, instruction and studio. It is a Hebrew-language course compulsory in Israel for newcomers, which rapidly teaches adults basic Hebrew skills, including

speaking, reading, writing and comprehension, along with the fundamentals of Israeli culture, history, geography, and civics. In addition to teaching Hebrew, the ulpan aims to help newcomers integrate as easily as possible into Israel's social, cultural and economic life.

21 Ceausescu, Nicolae (1918-1989)

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

22 Dachau

The first Nazi concentration camp, created in March 1933 in Dachau near Munich. Until the outbreak of the war, prisoners were mostly social democrats and German communists along with clergy and Jews: a total of ca. 5000 people. The guidelines of the camp were prepared by Theodor Eicke and prescribed cruel treatment of the prisoners: hunger, beatings, exhausting labor. This was treated as a model for other concentration camps. Dachau also had a training center for concentration camp staff. In 1939 Dachau became a place of terror and extermination, mostly for the social elites of the defeated countries. Some 250,000 inmates from 27 countries passed through Dachau, and 148,000 of them died there. Their labor was exploited for the arms industry and in quarries. The commanders of the camp during the war were: Alexander Piorkowski, Martin Weiss and Eduard Weiter. The camp was liberated on 29th April 1945 by the American army.

23 Kristallnacht

Nazi anti-Jewish violence on the night of 10th November 1938. The official pretext was the assassination two days earlier in Paris of Ernst vom Rath, third secretary of the German embassy, by a Polish Jew named Herschel Grynszpan. In an increasing atmosphere of tension engineered by the Germans, widespread attacks took place on Jews, Jewish property and synagogues throughout Germany and Austria. Shops were destroyed; warehouses, homes and synagogues were set on fire or otherwise destroyed. Many windows were broken and the night of violence thus became known as Kristallnacht (Crystal Night, or the Night of Broken Glass). At least 30,000 Jews were arrested and sent to concentration camps in Sachsenhausen, Buchenwald and Dachau. Though the German government attempted to present it as a spontaneous protest and punishment on the part of the Aryan, i.e., non- Jewish population, it was, in fact, carried out by order of the Nazi leaders.