Julia (Juci) Scheiner

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If in the interwar period you mentioned the name Juci Mestitz in Marosvasarhely, the majority of the people knew whom you were talking about.

She was everybody's favorite and has been ever since. You can still feel her distinguished education by the way she dresses and behaves. She looks stylish and neat.

With her kind and friendly, but never overbearing manner she quickly makes everyone love her. Everywhere she goes, she always finds friends. She always says she can't understand why people are so nice to her.

She loves to talk about the old days and it seems her memories don't upset her any longer. She gladly chats with her guests in her spacey two-bedroom apartment.

She still spends the summer holiday with her lady- friends who moved abroad. As if they were still young, they arrange where they should meet, and they spend a few weeks together.

Despite her age, Juci speaks and understands French, Italian, English and German well. She has an excellent memory and she loves reading.

- **Family background**

Of my paternal grandfather, Mihaly Mestitz, I only know he was a good- looking old man. He was born in 1830 and was originally from Bohemia, from a town called Raudnitz. I don't know why he came here, but I believe he was very young at the time. His name was originally Mertitz. He changed it slightly because Czechs pronounce 'r' as 's', and it seems he wrote it with an 's' instead of an 'r' when he came here. At that time, it was the Austro- Hungarian Monarchy.

[Editor's note: The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy came into being in 1867. Before this date both the Czech lands and Transylvania belonged to the Habsburg Empire.] I don't know anything about his education, nor where he lived, apart from Marosvasarhely. I only know that in 1850 he had a furniture store on the corner of the street formerly called Szentgyorgy Street [currently Revolutiei Street, downtown]. The store was called Mestitz Mihaly es fiai [Mihaly Mestitz and Sons].

A child never asks about these things, you know, she only overhears them, so I don't know too much about these things. From 1869 he operated a floorboard factory, a steam sawmill and a steam mill.

They must have been financially well off, since he was the first furniture manufacturer in Transylvania. My grandfather had to be a very forward- thinking man, as he advertised his furniture store. They were suppliers to the royal court. 'The cheapest place to buy furniture, the biggest furniture factory in Transylvania, Mihaly Mestitz and Sons: Szecsenyi Square, Marosvasarhely, and Unio Street, Kolozsvar.

We only sell top quality products, and we provide the longest warrantee for them. Enormous supply of housewares, a wide range of Persian rugs.' This is an ad from 1860-1870. Someone found it in a book and photocopied it for me. They won the golden award, in any case the top award, at furniture exhibitions in Vienna, Budapest and in Spain, I think in Barcelona.

By the time I was born, our family only owned three houses, but some say the Mestitz family used to have 21 houses in Marosvasarhely. I believe my grandfather probably invested his money in real estate, and when he opened the furniture factory, he sold the houses. I don't know where he got all that money from, but I do know that his name is on the marble tablet by the synagogue, amongst the names of people who donated money to build it.

His mark is still visible on one of the benches. Back then all Jews observed religion, but I don't think my grandfather was all that religious. All his children were born in Marosvasarhely. My dad was the youngest child of eight, and he was still very young when his father died. He never really talked about him. My grandfather died in 1909, three weeks before my older brother was born.

My paternal grandmother, Anna Mestitz, nee Fisher, was originally from Nagyszeben. I don't know when she moved to Budapest, but probably after my grandfather died. She suffered from some kind of illness and committed suicide in Budapest in 1915. The family never talked about this though. When my grandfather died, the life of luxury came to an end, and everything became harder.

There were eight children in the family, and many moved out: one of the boys went to Budapest, as did one of the girls, another of the girls moved to Brasso, another of the boys to Kolozsvar, each of them with their respective dowry. Only three of them remained at home, but one day my uncle moved to Kolozsvar, with his share; everybody got his portion, thus the family fortune was split up, but the business went on. My dad's siblings weren't religious, none of them kept a kosher household.

My father's oldest brother, born in 1862, was called Mor Mestitz. He was a handsome and very kind man. He studied to be a doctor, but in the second year of his studies he became schizophrenic and had to drop out. Then he married Matild Schwartz. His parents broke off contact with them. I think

they considered the woman too lowly.

As far as I know she was a cashier or something. They lived here in Marosvasarhely in a beautiful apartment on Szentgyorgy Street. He was always on good terms with my dad. The office was inside the furniture store and he used to come in and do whatever he wanted, but never did any actual work. As far as I can remember, he never worked.

Occasionally Uncle Mor's craziness [schizophrenia] broke out. They lived on Bolyai Street when one day he stood out naked in the window and played the violin. Uncle Mor was an outstanding violinist, and the founder of the Marosvasarhely Symphonic Orchestra. On another occasion he took a horn and began blowing it while walking up and down in the house. He used to do these kinds of crazy things. One day he just decided to move to Kolozsvar. There was nothing the family could do.

They rented an apartment in Kolozsvar, and he moved there with his wife. I know that when he went to Kolozsvar they gave him so much money that he bought two houses. Then he sent a message to my dad; 'Don't worry about your children, I will leave them the houses', but later he left everything to the Jewish community in Kolozsvar. They had been living there for several years when one day he asked my dad to come for him because he wanted to get away from there, he wanted to divorce his wife.

Well, my dad went to Kolozsvar for him, but in the end, he came back alone, because Uncle Mor decided he didn't want to divorce his wife after all. They adopted a boy, a nephew of his wife, Janos Feher, who became Janos Mestitz Feher. I had another relative, an uncle, colonel Janos Mestitz in Budapest, and the son of my uncle Ferenc Mestitz from Kolozsvar was also called Janos. He pulled lots of cons posing as one or the other Janos and my family was really disgusted by his actions, and eventually he was disowned. He died in Kolozsvar in 1938.

Ferenc Mestitz was the second oldest sibling. He was born in 1864. He was also the co-owner of the furniture factory, and was the manager of the branch in Kolozsvar. The furniture store was in Unio Street, the avenue by the main square that leads to the Romanian Opera House. When he died, one of his sons, Janos, took over the store.

I knew Uncle Ferenc's wife, Ilona Fridman, born in Zilah in 1873, - Auntie Ilonka. Ferenc died in Kolozsvar in 1923. She died later, in 1946, in Kolozsvar. They weren't religious Jews; she didn't keep a kosher household. They had three children: Gyorgy, Janos and Bozsi.

Gyorgy, who became a textile engineer, married the daughter of the senior consultant dentist of the hospital of the Protestant Church, Sarika Filep, a craftswoman. One day they moved to Vienna to run a guesthouse in one of the best locations, on the corner of Kaerntnerstrasse. Business was going very well, and I think they even added another level to it. But then came the Nazis from Germany, closing down a large number of offices, hotels and guesthouses.

They didn't know yet that Gyorgy was Jewish. His wife was Christian, and he had already converted to Christianity. When they requested his certificates of origin, Gyorgy came home saying that he needed to have those documents made, but he secretly arranged with his wife to sell the guesthouse and to meet somewhere.

They never returned to Vienna. They came home, learned three professions - cookery, confectionery, and another I don't know - and emigrated to Australia, where, together with another

married couple, they opened a pig farm somewhere near Sydney. Later they sold the farm and moved to Sydney. They bought a house and opened a confectionery.

Gyorgy's brother, Janos, was the manager of the Mestitz furniture store's branch in Kolozsvar. Later the store became independent and they bought it. Janos had twins. The sisters graduated from medical school in Marosvasarhely. It was during the Hungarian era 1, and the university was Hungarian. They lived in Karoly Molter's house, where they rented a room. The house was on the same street as ours, so we often invited them over for lunch. Their mother, Ella Szathmari, still lives in Nagykanizsa and she must be at least 90 years old. Ella's parents had a guesthouse in Tusnad. Her mother visited here once and told my mother to send me there because she was certain that the air in Tusnad would do my appetite good. I went there after a while. It was a beautiful, pleasant spa. In the guesthouse, I lived with two of my Christian girlfriends; one of them later became the wife of Erno, the son of my uncle Albert Mestitz.

Bozsi, the daughter of my uncle Ferenc, got married to a gentleman of half- Jewish origin and lived in Nagyvarad. He managed the local brewery.

My uncle Janos Mestitz, born in 1865, attended the Ludovika Military School in Budapest. He was a jolly man. Later he was posted to Kassa [today Slovakia] as an officer and military commandant of the town. He was awarded the 'Dobrotiny' title of nobility later during a battle in World War I.

When he got this title, Uncle Janos wanted it to apply to the whole family. This made my dad real upset because he couldn't see why we needed a noble title when everybody already knew and respected the Mestitz family. Anyway, we didn't need it, and that's where it ended. If we had had this title in 1940, we wouldn't have been deported, but how were we supposed to know that then?

Uncle Janos' wife was called Ilona Kelen. I think she was Jewish, but I didn't know her because at that time I hadn't yet been to Budapest, where they lived. When Uncle Janos decided to retire as a colonel, he was told that if he converted to Christianity he would get the pension for the next rank up. He replied that if 53 battles and 12 high military decorations weren't enough, he wouldn't convert. And he was right.

- **Growing up**

I saw him only once, when I first went to Budapest. I think I was 16 and I went to Budapest by myself. I stayed at the Grimm Guesthouse. It was right beside the Vigado. My father told me that my uncle had no telephone so I should write him a postcard. On the second or third day of my stay the receptionist called and said that a young man was looking for me and I should go into the lounge. I did that and he turned out to be Uncle Janos. He had instructed them to say that it was a young man looking for me.

He was a charming man. I had to dress up and go with him to the terrace of a coffeehouse on Erzsebet Square, where a group of retired officers used to meet. He took me there to introduce me to them, because they were his friends, and we stayed together until nightfall. I'm quite certain that none of them were Jewish.

It happened the same year [in 1939] that Uncle Janos jumped off a tram while it was slowing down before a stop, fell down, broke his leg or something, got blood poisoning and died. He had two

children: Ella and Viktor.

Viktor was a handsome man, resembling my father. They lived in Budapest, hiding in a shelter during the war. When the war was over and they could come out onto the street, he left the shelter to freshen up, but he was shot near the Danube. His wife was Austrian - I don't think she was Jewish - and after her husband died, she returned to Vienna.

I knew Ella, my uncle's daughter, very well. We visited them many times because during the Hungarian era I began visiting Budapest. She had two daughters. After my paternal grandmother was left a widow, she moved in with them.

I was invited to lunch in Budapest, at the house of Jozsef Fekete's wife, my aunt Iren Mestitz. Iren was born in 1873. She moved to Budapest in 1908, but I don't know anything else about her. She died in Budapest in 1941.

Uncle Jozsef Fekete, her husband, was an engineer, teacher and principal in a vocational college, opposite Zsigmond Kemeny Street. When they said that if he converted, he could be promoted to the ministry, but if he didn't he would be demoted to an inferior position, he accepted it.

In 1908 he Magyarized his name Schwartz [black in German] to Fekete [black in Hungarian]. His 'godfather' was the under-secretary or one of the ministers. He became an under-secretary at the Ministry of Education. His merits were rewarded with the 'Naznanfalvi' title of nobility. They had three children: Sandor, Istvan and Laszlo.

Sandor, the oldest one, became a doctor. He was the director of the National Stefania Institute of Pediatrics in Budapest and committed suicide when he was 32 years old. Istvan died at the age of 16 or 17, while Laszlo disappeared somewhere in Brazil.

Once, when I went to Budapest, Aunt Iren invited me for a cup of tea. I dressed up elegantly and we went together to Gellert, just the two of us. There were at least thirty tables arranged in a 'U' shape, and in the middle, there was a band playing.

We went to the end of the row of tables, to the back, to avoid that I would be asked to dance by anybody. [That's how Juci thought about her aunt's idea of where they should sit.] Then, on the way, Aunt Iren said she wanted to have a word with me. The previous day they had had some guests, I don't know who, the wife and daughter of a dignitary, I think.

After they left, Uncle Jozsef went to the bathroom and found some mascara there and asked whose garbage this was. Auntie Iren didn't want Uncle Jozsef to tell off her lady-friends, and told him it was all Juci's. And she asked me not to tell him - if by any chance he asked me - that the mascara wasn't mine. That's why she invited me for tea. This really hurt my feelings.

Albert Mestitz, born in 1867, managed the store of the furniture factory on the main square. The family had a house there and they lived in it. He married his second cousin, Sarolta Mestitz, born in 1865 came from Raudnitz, from Bohemia.

Uncle Albert went there on business or something, met her there and fell in love with her. She was pretty and cute, and I adored her so much that I visited them every day. However, she never learned to speak proper Hungarian. Albert died in 1937 in Marosvasarhely. They had four children,

two boys and two girls: Sandor, Erno, Vilma and Paula.

Sandor, the oldest son, grew up with us. Later he moved to Temesvar, but when Marosvasarhely was returned to Hungary, he came home. We were deported together. He ended up somewhere in Warsaw. During the bombing they had to leave in the morning, and they left him there with a head injury.

When they could return in the evening, everything had burned down. I still don't know whether he perished or was taken away from there. The other son, Erno, worked here at the store with his father, and married one of my Christian girlfriends.

Vilma married Dezso Grunfeld from Medgyes, a very kind man. They lived a wealthy, very rich life. One of their sons was 14 or 15 when he emigrated to Palestine. This was when children were carried on two ships and one of them sunk.

[Editor's note: Three ships set off for Israel in August 1944: the Morina, Mefkure and Bolbul. Mefkure was sunk.] Fortunately he was on another ship. At first he lived in a kibbutz, and he loved it there. Three or four years later his brother followed him to the same kibbutz.

Uncle Albert had one more daughter, Paula. She lived here in Marosvasarhely. She had a very nice beauty salon and I learned beauty treatment from her. She co-owned a salon, and when she saw that she wasn't allowed to work upstairs in the shop, she continued her beauty treatment in a small room down a few stairs. She worked as a cosmetician and also had some clients. She married a Romanian, Timu Dradeteanu, who later became a quality control director.

Paula Mestitz, born in 1868, married a wealthy man called Jozsef Matyas, a corn trader, much older than Auntie Paula. He was related to the well-known professor Matyas Matyas. Matyas Matyas had a sanatorium in Kolozsvar, but this was later expropriated, and then he moved to Marosvasarhely, and worked as a surgeon.

He looked like a misfit barber, and didn't really look like someone of his occupation, however he was a phenomenal surgeon. I didn't get to know Jozsef Matyas; he was probably originally from Brasso. They had four children: Edith, Erno, Sandor and Olga.

Olga married an American millionaire of Polish origin. She didn't want to marry him, but after two years, when the guy showed up again, they really hit it off. Olga was beautiful. They lived alternately in Berlin and America. He was an estate speculator and had estates in New York, Miami and Berlin. He owned 14 blocks in Berlin at the time Hitler expropriated them. They went over to America, and after World War II they returned to Berlin and settled there.

Then they divorced. I only met them once. Some ten months after they got married they were here and I was just visiting a girlfriend in Brasso. Auntie Paula invited me for dinner - she was already living by herself - but in the meantime they had been invited somewhere else. When there they found out who I was - somebody there knew my father - they insisted on inviting me, too. We went there, and it was a royal feast. I even got sick from eating too much.

I don't know much about Ignac Mestitz. He was born in 1870. He lived in the same yard as we did on Dozsa Gyorgy Street. There were a number of various houses, warehouses, stables and coach-houses, and the office. Ignac wasn't quite right in the head, but he was the quiet type, so we never

noticed anything. One day in 1921 we found out he had died, killed himself. I was eight or nine then.

I don't know anything about Anna Mestitz, because she died in the same year she was born, 1871.

Albert Laszlo was my maternal grandfather. Originally he was called Lowinger, but he probably wanted to assimilate and Magyarized his name. Grandfather Laszlo was born in 1857 in Martonos, Hungary, and my grandmother, Hermina Spitz in Mako, also in Hungary, in 1862.

Regarding my grandmother's siblings, I know that one of her younger sisters married a lawyer from Szeged. One of her brothers, Uncle Bernat, was a doctor and lived on Andrassy Street, and she had another brother who lived in Trieste, Italy. This one was a bank manager, and his wife was the daughter of another bank manager.

I didn't know them personally. They had a son, Pali, who worked at the Dreyfus Company. He used to go to France, England, and one day he was sent to India as manager. Later he lived in London with his Hindu wife.

Grandfather Laszlo was educated and very well brought up. He was the manager of the lumber mill in Palotailva, he didn't own a factory. He had also been a timber merchant. I never asked him about what my grandmother's qualifications had been, but she was very skilful. I don't know how they met and how they got married.

They had to be living alternately in Szeged and Mako because Janos, my mom's older brother and my mother, Ilona, were born in Szeged, while Margit, her older sister and Erzsebet, her younger sister were in Mako. A few years separated each of them.

Janos Laszlo was an accountant and did bookkeeping for Uncle Simi, Samuel Deutsch, the husband of Aunt Margit. Janos was a prisoner of war for a very long time [in World War I], but one could learn other languages there. He spoke Russian, German, French and Italian.

The scene when he arrived at our house is still very vivid in my memory. He knew to whom my mom was married and where they lived, but had no idea where his parents lived. One morning he arrived, I was just coming out of the bathroom, and there they were sitting at the table in the children's room, Janos and another soldier, and they were talking to my mom. They had just arrived back from captivity.

Janos' family lived on Kossuth Lajos Street for a while, then they moved to Arad, and later to Temesvar. He got married in 1921. His wife, Csilla Weisz was a housewife. They have a daughter, Eva Laszlo, born in Marosvasarhely in 1922, who became a fashion designer.

In 1950 she married Istvan Donath, a textile engineer, who lives in Germany and Australia. She has a granddaughter, Ingrid, who was a talented violinist, and they entered her in the Bucharest Academy of Music.

In the meantime, in 1972, she married an engineer, Ervin Arden, and they emigrated to Israel, where she finished her studies. Then they divorced, and Ervin remained in Israel, while she moved to America. She always wanted to live in America. She first played in the philharmonic orchestra from Tel-Aviv, then in the one from New York. She was a very talented violinist. She divorced her

first husband in 1979, and in 1996 got married again, to Siegfried Becker, a German physical instructor. Today she is a dentist in San Francisco.

Margit Laszlo lived in Marosvasarhely and Szaszregen. Her husband Samuel Deutsch was a textile engineer. He studied economics in Budapest and got married in 1909. He owned a textile store in front of the Bernadi statue, in a corner house. He also had a store in Szaszregen. [Szaszregen is about 30 km from Marosvasarhely.]

The store in Szaszregen was managed by someone, but they had to move to Szaszregen, because the fellow wasn't reliable, and pulled a dirty trick on them. They had two sons: Laszlo and Gyula. Margit and her husband died in Auschwitz in 1944.

Erzsebet Laszlo had a fairly adventurous life. She lived in Marosvasarhely, Kolozsvar, Arad, Temesvar and Bat-Yam in Israel. Her husband, Henrik Leb was a landowner and insurance agent. He came to Marosvasarhely and met Erzsebet here.

They got married in 1924. Their daughter, Vera, was born in 1926 in Marosvasarhely. They weren't very religious. They first lived in Ratosnya. Between the wars he worked in the timber business. They had two or three locomotive engines that ran to and from the forest and carried timber.

Anyhow, the business went very well. I know this because I visited them in Ratosnya once during my summer holiday. They lived there for several years, then they moved to Kolozsvar, then to Arad, and to Temesvar.

Erzsebet wanted to come to Marosvasarhely during the Hungarian era, but Vera didn't want it by any means because she was head over heels in love with her future husband. And they were lucky not to come here because they weren't deported. In 1947, when Vera was a 2nd year student, she married an ophthalmologist called Adalbert Schul. They nicknamed her father Henrik, Bubi, but Vera's husband had the same nickname: so one of them was called little Bubi, the other big Bubi.

The youngsters wanted to emigrate to Israel. Their parents went with them to Israel, because, they said, if their only child emigrated, they would, too. The husband's older sister was already living there, and they moved in with her until they got a job.

They lived in Bat-Yam, a district of Tel Aviv near the sea, a beautiful place. Henrik then built a house, also somewhere in Tel Aviv, where they lived afterwards. Vera has a daughter, Aviva Schul, who married a very decent Romanian, and they have three children. One of them wanted to stay in the army, the other one is currently a soldier, doing his military service, and the third one is 15 or 16 years old.

My maternal grandparents weren't wealthy, but they had everything. They had a four-bedroom-apartment and a servant. If Erzsebet had to go to a ball, she always wore a new dress. Grandfather Laszlo was the manager of the timber mill. Dad was then 32 and visited them.

Mom was sitting on the stairs with her younger sister and they were licking a casserole dish in which they mixed the cream for a cake. It was the first time he saw her. He didn't pay much attention to her, then one day they were both invited somewhere and my dad noticed her beautiful legs.

Then he decided to propose to her, but they didn't want to let her go, because they first wanted to marry off her older sister Margit, who was one and a half years older. They wanted him to marry Margit, but my dad refused. Mom graduated from high- school and she got married as soon as she turned 18. They were married in a normal wedding by a rabbi. They must have had a beautiful wedding

Mihaly Mestitz, my older brother, whom we all called Misi, was born in 1909 in Marosvasarhely, and he was five years older than me. He was a very naughty child until he turned 14 or 15. When he was a little boy, he was sickly and often brought to Abbazia. This was before we were born. He didn't recover, and then mom's uncle - the one who lived on Andrassy Street in Budapest and was a doctor - told them to bathe him in walnut leaves twice a day as this would strengthen him. He was right.

Klara Mestitz, my older sister, was born in 1911 and died at the age of ten and a half. I must have been eight then - I was born in 1913 - and strangely, I don't remember her at all. She fell ill with scarlet fever, and then with blood poisoning, which killed her.

Three of us were already born when World War I broke out. My father went to Galicia as a captain. He was sent there, to the outskirts of Lemberg [today Ukraine], because the enemy had destroyed fourteen sawmills, and they knew he owned one here, and he had the proper competence.

After I recovered from pneumonia, the doctor recommended a change of air. I don't know whose idea it was to go there - looking at it today, it seems absurd. Probably my dad was longing for us. He sent a sergeant for us, and he took my grandfather Laszlo, my mom, me, my older sister and Misi to my dad's place in Galicia for a change of air. I think it was total nonsense to make such a venture during the war. We went there by train, and we had to change trains many times.

I remember that they tied us together by our hands in order to keep us together. Despite all this Misi still managed to free himself and he wandered so far away that when they managed to find him, it was just one minute before the train's departure. We planned to stay only for a few months, but we remained there until 1916. Dad was stationed 80 kilometers from Lemberg, and he had a lot of people under his command. There were many officers, and they were building, as well as repairing the sawmills. Although I don't remember, I'm quite sure there were other Jewish soldiers there, as well.

We called my younger brother Istvan Mestitz, who was born in 1917 or 1918, Pityu. I remember that on a Sunday afternoon my mom had a party, and the guests were sitting around the table and were having a meal. They brought their children along, and we were playing with them in the snow in the courtyard, having lots of fun. We put the kids on the sled one after the other, and when we put Pityu on it, he fell over with his head in the snow.

He had his cap on and he said how delicious the snow tasted. No matter how we put him on the sled, he instantly lay back in the snow, and said how much he liked it when his head was dragged in the snow. When we went inside, he went to mom saying his head hurt. She pushed the chair aside and he put his head in her lap. He fell ill with meningitis and died of it within three days.

The doctor said mom would never recover from that if she didn't give birth to another child. By the grace of God, one year after Pityu died, in 1921, Andras Mestitz was born. He was the opposite of

Misi, meaning that he was born a good boy. Andras was always obedient, and never found anything too hard to do. He was a calm, beautiful child. By the way, his son and grandson are just like him.

We were living on Dozsa Gyorgy Street in a very large yard. The sawmill and the mill were also in this yard. On the other side of the street there was only one house. The estate between Kemeny Zsigmond Street and Poklos creek was all our property; later some parts of it were sold off.

Uncle Ignac was living in the same yard with us. He wasn't quite right in the head and committed suicide while he was still quite young. We had a neighbor living on the same floor as us, in a smaller apartment next door, and everybody called her Keresztmama [Godmother]. I think she was Jewish.

Below us there lived another Jewish family, the grandparents of Zsuzsa Diamanstein. Zsuzsa was born in that house. She still lives in Marosvasarhely, she is a friend of mine. A Christian family lived downstairs.

We lived in a very pleasant apartment, with four rooms plus a small room, which became Misi's room when he got older. This small lumber-room was at the end of the corridor. They cleared it out and furnished it for him. I think it had a bed, a washbowl and a desk. But it had a window that gave onto the outside corridor, and His Lordship sneaked out and went away every night.

My parents didn't know anything about this. One day they came home early and noticed he wasn't home. I knew all about his escapades. I remember that my father went back to the streets and found him somewhere around Albino Square. He was hugging a tree because he was so drunk he couldn't go further. He was given a good dressing down and his golden era came to an end.

One of the four rooms was the 'men's room'. I don't know why they called it that. It was the most elegant room; guests were entertained there, and it had a bookcase and things like that. Later they would have called it a drawing-room or living-room. We had a dining-room, a very big corner room which was a bedroom; my piano was there.

We also had a children's room and a bathroom. As I said, my brother Misi was a very naughty child, and they always locked him in the bathroom. He couldn't get out, so he stood out in the window and began screaming so loud that my mother was ashamed of him and let him back in. He was sickly, so they allowed him to do whatever he wanted, and that's why he became so mischievous.

When he was around 15 or 16 he started to entrust his secrets to me, and when he saw I didn't divulge anything, I became the keeper of his secrets. Later, throughout our lives, we always wrote separate letters, and if he enclosed a letter to me with one he wrote to our parents, they never read it. My parents were very honest people in every way.

We had a female cook, a housemaid and someone who came to do our laundry and to iron, but she only came when we needed her. I remember that the two servants did some needlework every afternoon because they finished their work in the morning and had nothing to do in the afternoon. They weren't Jewish. We also had a man in the mill, and we could send the servants there if we needed something. Dad always hired Saxon girls for housemaids, because he wanted us to practice German.

Initially we also had a governess. I suspect she was a bad or wicked German governess - although I don't remember anything like this - because later, when I grew up and talked about such things, I always said that I only feared three things: Germans, Kossuth Lajos Street [in Marosvasarhely] and cancer. I'm only saying that some German person must have been mean to me because we didn't know at that time, what they would do to us. It was a premonition. I had fears that I could never explain, such as my fear of the Germans. Besides, I'm living on Kossuth Lajos Street now.

Where we lived, there was a garden where the grass couldn't grow because the children always stamped it down. The kids who were living on that street all came there to play because there was so much space there. My father installed all kinds of gym equipment; it had everything from swings to climbing poles.

However, I always played the piano, that was my favorite 'toy', and I played everything I heard. When I was seven, dad enrolled me in the music academy, which was in the building of the Palace of Culture. I can still see him how he put his hand on my neck while we walked.

He liked to walk with me this way. He brought me to the teacher, a Saxon lady called Leona. She only taught me for two years, then someone else came, because she got sick; she had lung cancer. In any case, I studied 11 years at the Music Academy.

Whenever one of the children got sick, the others were sent away from home. On these occasions we stayed either at Aunt Paula's or Margit's, or at grandmother's. Grandmother Laszlo was a very beautiful and good old lady, she always tried to make peace between us, and we kids loved her very much. We had a little cousin, Erzsebet's daughter - she called her Mamaka - and so we called her that, too.

She was neither atheist, nor religious. For example, on holidays, when the men were praying at the table, she always found something to do in the kitchen. Even though both my aunts, and us too, brought the servants with us for help, and my grandmother also had a servant at home, she still had something to do because there were so many of us and we had to be served, as she used to say. I don't remember whether my grandparents had any friends, they spent their time with their children and grandchildren.

We celebrated the seder at my grandmother Laszlo's, and we spent every holiday there until my grandfather died. My grandmother's children were also there, in a word, the Laszlo family. These occasions were merry and festive, and it was all so natural. My youngest brother, Andras, was the one who asked the questions [the mah nishtanah] at the seder supper, but I don't remember who conducted the ritual. The tables were laid beautifully, we always had challah, but I don't remember what other meals we had.

We spent most of our summer holidays at Szovata, together with our friends, a young couple, and we stayed there six weeks or two months. Our father came with us only to stay a week or two, and then he only came for the weekends. We rented a villa with four rooms: one for each couple and the other two for three children each. Both couples brought along a housemaid. They slept on the glassed-in porch and they cooked, thus it was quite comfortable.

On several occasions we stayed in the village, and facing the river, on the other side, there was the villa of Queen Mary. On mornings we used to go to Medve Lake to bathe, and on afternoons to the

creek, since all our friends used to go there. We were together in the mornings and afternoons, as well.

Once a year, in fall, we had to go to Borszek. Borszek was my dad's obsession, he adored the place. [Borszek is one of the most renowned regions of mineral water springs in Romania.] Once, when my brother Andras was six weeks old, dad took us to Borszek. It was quite cold there.

Occasionally we had to put a stove inside the room. We didn't like Borszek because there was no place to bathe [there is no lake or river there], but our parents' friends had a villa there and we spent the time playing. Later, of course, everybody could choose where to spend his or her holidays. I continued to go to Szovata.

Our girlfriends' family, the Matyas family, had a one-storied villa facing Medve Lake. It was a large Hungarian villa, and I used to stay there. I insisted on paying for my stay. It was really nice. Later it was demolished and a hotel was built there.

My family was never involved in politics, neither when Transylvania was still a monarchy [that is, when it belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy], nor later [after 1920, following the Trianon Peace Treaty] 2, nor when it became part of Romania. I never heard about dad being a member of any political parties.

Apart from that he was involved in everything, there was no bank where he wasn't on the board of directors, there was no school of which he wasn't a vice-president or president of the board; he always took part in everything and helped wherever he could. He was an associate at the sawmill, the furniture factory, the floorboard factory; the Mestitz family were involved in everything.

I know that, for instance, that my mom had to pick up his weekly pay from Uncle Albert in the furniture shop. My dad and uncle both picked up a certain sum of money, probably as wages. There was always a good relationship between the siblings, but a great deal depended on my father because he was a good-tempered, extremely kind man.

He was a very good- looking man, gentle and polite, and most people liked him. He graduated from high-school, but he was never really encouraged to study further because he had to be involved in the family business. I don't think he attended cheder, but he always observed the holidays according to the traditions. On these occasions he and my mom went to the Neolog 3 synagogue. On holidays going by horse and carriage wasn't allowed, so they went on foot. Our family wasn't Orthodox, so dad worked on Saturdays, and we didn't keep a kosher household.

In the early 1920s the furniture factory in Dozsa Gyorgy Street was set on fire three times; I remember we were still children. The workers began to organize themselves: probably not officially, but by their own accord, and I don't exclude the possibility that this was triggered by some sort of provocation. In those times this was the first industrial company in Marosvasarhely, and probably the fact that it was owned by a Jew was also a factor.

We were at Grandmother Laszlo's house when we saw the two-horse carriage racing along by the corner and we were very anxious about what could have happened. We had a black and a yellow varnished horse carriage, two horses, a car and a truck. And suddenly we saw dad and mom hurrying away with the car, and then we heard the sirens screaming. That was the first time the factory burned down. The problem after it was set on fire for the second time, was that there

wasn't enough time to insure the factory again. When it was set on fire for the third time, everything burned down and the insurance company paid nothing. We never found out whether it was a worker or somebody else who set it on fire.

Mom completely lost her head, because my brother Andras was still a babe-in- arms. She rushed home, took off her elegant coat and her hat, grabbed her jewel-box, took Andras in her arms and ran out of the house to take him to Auntie Margit, her older sister, or to my grandmother - I don't know exactly where. On the way almost all of her jewelry fell out, but a young lady from the office followed her and picked everything up. Mom went by car to save the children because it wasn't only the factory that had caught fire, but also other buildings from the yard. The attendants protected the house as best as they could, and the fire fighters were also there. The water level in Poklos creek was very low, and there was no water. All the young people came there to help out. Afterwards we sold the big house and everything we had there.

On Grivita Street, a restaurateur was having a house built, and he came to dad saying that he'd heard he was looking for a place to live, and if my dad was willing to move into that house, the walls would be erected just as he wanted. Dad accepted. The house was finished the following year, and we moved in. We didn't stay too long because when we took it over, although it seemed like the walls were dry enough, it turned out they weren't. We kids, got all kinds of diseases. Andras got chicken pox, and then measles, which I caught from him. My parents had already lost two children, so their concern about us was justified. We moved then to Koteles Street.

We used to read every book that fell into our hands, and we read a great deal. So did my mom and dad. First of all we had all of the German and Hungarian classics, in Gothic print, and in special binding. We read mostly in Hungarian, the works of the great Hungarian writers. We always talked about what we were reading at the time. My dad was someone with whom you could discuss everything. He was a very bright, intelligent man. They used to buy periodicals, and they probably subscribed to a daily paper, but I don't remember which one. We didn't really read purely religious books. We had prayer books because we needed them since we strictly observed the holidays.

We weren't allowed to read romantic novels, like the ones Mrs. Beniczky wrote. We called her 'Lenke B dot Beniczky' because there was a B followed by a dot in her name. The books they didn't want us to read were always put in the back row on the bookcase. In the evenings I preferred reading to going out. We only had one central light in the children's room, so I used to pick out the books we weren't supposed to read, and when my parents arrived - there was a large gateway - I could hear them, and by the time they came in I had switched off the light. I waited until it was quiet again and they fell asleep, got out of my bed, opened the door of the stove that was in my room, laid prone in front of it and read there.

Grandfather Laszlo died in 1926, and my grandma moved in with her daughter, Margit. They were living opposite the Catholic grammar school, now called Unirea Lyceum. I was approximately 15 or 16, so it must have been around 1928, when we got a radio set. An engineer came from Kolozsvar to install it. We were all stuck to the radio all the time. Grandmother Laszlo, a very intelligent woman, listened to the radio day and night. She always knew everything.

My parents had many Jewish friends, and used to organize parties for 60-70 people at one or another of their friends' apartments. The apartments were big those days. I don't remember what they were doing, nor where we were during these parties. We were surely there for supper. Mom

frequented the Jewish club, where I think men were allowed, too. Each week, on a specific day, she went there to play rummy. They used to play cards and chat. Dad didn't go there because he got used to going to the Hungarian casino years before. He came from work at the end of the day and went directly to the casino. They played cards, read and chatted. For the summer, the casino was moved to the gym-garden, just a little further away from the present old maternity ward. It was a very pleasant place with a terrace, people used to go there in the afternoons or the evenings. There was a building rented by a married dancing instructor couple who came from Kolozsvar. We took dancing lessons there. I brought along the uncle of Zsuzsa Diamanstein, who lived in the same house as us, and I believe my brother also took dancing lessons there. Later they organized banquets there.

The ball season started in fall, and every Saturday they organized a ball in the main hall of the Palace of Culture. It began with a performance on the stage, then the chairs were pushed aside so that there was room to dance. I performed many times and in many places. We had a Jewish ball, a civic ball, a Kata Bethlen ball. [Kata Bethlen was an 18th century countess and writer in Transylvania.] We organized Jozsef Kiss 4 evenings, where everyone had to show up wearing the Hungarian gala-dress. Jozsef Kiss was a poet, but I haven't heard of him ever since. When I first attended the Jozsef Kiss evening I was a fairly big girl, and they let me dance a few times, then sent me home with a servant. The parents stayed there for as long as they liked. There was the Maros ball in the Maros restaurant, and it was imperative for my parents to attend it. Everyone was invited.

When I was a big girl and the college years began, there were students who made money playing music, and formed bands. For instance, there was the Young Boy Band from Kolozsvar, made up only of upper-class students. On the main square, where the cinema called Pitik would later be, during the communist era, was a Jewish cinema in the interwar period. Everyone knew it as the Jewish cinema, probably because it was owned by a Jew. They also organized evening parties and performances there: singing, poetry readings and other performances. There were all kinds of movies shown in the Jewish cinema, and we went there quite often. There were times when there was nothing going on on Sunday afternoons and we were so bored, that we went to see both shows: we watched the movie running in the Jewish cinema, then we went over to Transilvania cinema on Bolyai Street to see another one. In the interwar period there were four or five cinemas in Marosvasarhely.

Young people like us never went to cafés, but my parents - when they weren't invited anywhere and had no guests over - went to a café and to have some coffee, ice-cream or cakes. What really mattered was that they got some fresh air and listened to some music. There were two cafés, one of them was called New York. Both had an outdoor terrace, and both had music, so when it stopped at one of them, it started at the other. People either sat on the benches, or they walked around, dated each other and flirted.

We had a small cabin by the dam on the Maros. Dad always checked the weather to see if we could go there - he was crazy about the place and loved going there. We didn't cook there, we just brought ready-cooked food with us. There was an underground storage room, a hole they cut inside the cabin floor. In this hole with a trap-door we put the containers of food. The roof of the cabin was longer than the cabin by the length of a room, and the outer part was supported by pillars.

We used to have lunch under this covered portion, so we had full comfort. We had two boats, one belonged to my parents; we called it Doc-Doc, like dad used to call mom when she was pregnant. My younger brother had a skiff, a one-man coxed, long and narrow boat. We were living a life of ease then. Next door my uncle Erno had a house, a caravan he converted: not the outside, he only furnished it.

There were always so many people coming and going. When we grew older, our parents allowed us to go there on our own, with our friends. As soon as we had some time off, we used to go to the Maros dam. There were only Jews in our group. We were there all the time and had lots of fun. One could go rowing up the Maros, and there were some islands one could go to.

I only attended the Jewish school in the 1st and 2nd grade of elementary school. Only Jewish children attended it, and we learned Hebrew and had religion classes there. In the third and 4th grade I attended the Protestant school. I don't remember why I didn't continue my studies in the Jewish school.

The Protestant school was in the long building on Szentgyorgy Street where not long ago the Maros group had its headquarters. The teacher was called Laszlo Kovacs, and he was a good, kind man, and we loved him very much. I loved that school very much. Before they went to the Protestant church they probably asked us whether we wanted to go or not, but all of us went there anyway. For religious lessons we went over to the Jewish school.

Then I was entered in the Unirea grammar school for girls, a Romanian school. I attended it for four years. This school was an exceptional one; it had an excellent principal who did an outstanding job. We had an acquaintance who attended the French Institute, called L'arché, and my parents insisted on enrolling me there.

Initially I cried a lot because I didn't want to go there, since my girlfriends were studying at Unirea school, but eventually I came to love the institute as well. We had a teacher called Mademoiselle Breton. I don't recall the other teacher's name. We learned everything in French, except for the German language. I think there were three Romanian students, children of merchants, the others were mostly Hungarian and Jewish. Towards the end of the 2nd year, the French consul from Bucharest paid us a visit and awarded two medals, one to me.

In the meantime, from the age of eight, I also took piano lessons at the Music Academy. I wanted to dedicate my life to playing the piano, because I was talented, but my fingers were too short. I practiced twice as much as the others. It should have taken 14 years to complete the Music Academy , but I did it in 12 years. Between the seventh and eighth year my teacher told me, 'Juci, you'll have to spend a year stretching your fingers.'Then, around 1935-1938, I gave piano lessons, and I had two or three students. Dad wouldn't let me have more, he only wanted me to learn how hard it is to earn money.

Misi always wanted to become a doctor. He attended Bolyai high-school and had two friends with whom he shared the same desk from elementary school to high-school graduation. They all wanted to become doctors. However, my dad needed someone to take over from him someday. Besides, they all failed the Romanian test at graduation.

There were 28 of them in the class, and 27 failed. My brother was 19 when my dad sent him for a year to Budapest to graduate, because my uncle, Jozsef Fekete, who was an under-secretary, was on the graduation committee that year.

Then he spent a year in Munich and another year in Arad in a furniture store or factory, I don't recall. When he was 21, he came back here to work in the store with my uncle Erno; in the end he said he wasn't willing to do this his entire life: waiting for customers, packing the commodities. In those days they were selling not just one piece of furniture at a time, but furniture for two or three rooms.

Misi wanted to become a doctor at any cost and he was 23 when my father eventually gave in, after he saw that his son would never give up. He graduated in Hungary, and that wasn't enough to enter a Romanian university. He met a guy here who had been to Italy, and he told him a few things. Misi then went to Italy. He completed the six years schooling in five. However, he managed to play for time for about eight years pretending that he had work to do in the hospital because he fell in love with my sister-in-law, who had just graduated from high-school.

Her name is Clara Maletti, and she's a Catholic. Her father, a wealthy man, was a pharmacist in a small town near Bologna. Misi rented a car every week and went there. He told dad that he had fallen in love with a girl and wanted to marry her. Dad said that he had no problem with her not being Jewish as long as she came from a decent family and was decent, but he told him to come home and validate his degree, and then he could go back. They got married in 1938 in Bologna.

Misi and Clara moved back from Italy to Marosvasarhely in 1939. Previously, we moved into a house facing the corner of Bolyai Street called Csiki House, in the upstairs apartment. It was a larger apartment, so they could move in with us. Then my mom sent out somebody to bring a beast and something to drink for the whole bunch [the family]. There was roast pork in the main square, and everybody just called it beast. We didn't need a better meal.

The main square of Marosvasarhely was a market-square. In the 1930s the marketplace was there. Thursday was market day, but the market was open on other days, too. You could find many things there, it was colorful and nobody ever thought the market should be anywhere else. Everybody had a favorite vendor and usually bought what they needed from her. One could find anything: boots, handcrafts, food or heart-shaped gingerbread. By a given hour everything was cleaned up because Marosvasarhely was a tidy city. Where you currently find the Fashion House there was a passage-way. The market was later relocated behind the city- hall. The main square wasn't developed like today, there was only plain asphalt and benches. In the evening, people could go and promenade on the main square, and everybody knew where the others were at any given time. I also knew where there was somebody to flirt with; where I could find the boys I really liked. The whole family went out for a walk.

Misi began his studies and went to Kolozsvar for exams. He only had three exams left when the Hungarian era came, and the university was relocated, and we had no idea where he was. After eight months we found out that the whole university had been moved to Szeben. Szeben belonged to Romania. He went there and completed his exams. After that he got hired at the sanatorium in Marosvasarhely as a surgeon. Czako was the owner. There was no clinic in Marosvasarhely at that time.

My younger brother Andras got good grades, although we had never seen him study. It seems that he paid attention and understood everything right there at school. He finished high-school and attended business school. His form-master at the Romanian business school was Romulus Platon, a Romanian gentleman. All the students knew that he was courting me. He was Romeo and I was Juliet - which is what they used to call us. They were always watching what grades he awarded to Andras, that's why he was afraid to give Andras the grades he deserved. When he graduated from high-school at 18, my dad died. He had already matriculated at medical school, and to be certain of success he took the exams in Romanian. The ones who took the exam in Hungarian, all succeeded, and those who took it in Romanian failed. So he had to manage the store, because there was nobody else to do that, since my older brother was away. We didn't have the furniture factory anymore, but there was a factory in Szalonta and another one, I don't know where, which worked for us and supplied us with furniture.

There was a decree in the Romanian era that only allowed people to open a business, if they passed a certain exam in Bucharest, regardless of where they had studied. So I had to go to Bucharest for that exam. In the spring of 1940 I opened a beauty salon in the main square, then, in fall, the Hungarians came in. The salon was on the ground floor of a three-storey house. It was a nice and very spacious location, the furniture was cream- colored, the vases, the ash-trays, and the drapes were dark green. We had custom furniture, but I don't know who made it. It was beautiful and very stylish. We had three windows, but they were not onto the street, but onto a courtyard. Someone told me she wanted to be my first customer. I saw her one day on the main square, went to her and told her that if she was still interested, the salon would open on such and such a day. On the next day, when after lunch I went to open the salon, there was a young provincial couple, unknown to me, already waiting in the walkway. They didn't know they were my first customers, I told them later. My name was displayed on the gate, they saw the notice 'Juci Mestitz Cosmetician' and waited for me. I worked from 9am to 1pm and from 4pm to 7pm, but I never managed to finish on time, I always had to stay late. I had many customers. The Jews liked to come here, of course, but I also had Romanian, Hungarian and Saxon patients, too, I made no distinction.

- **During the war**

Looking onto the street there was an insurance company, and we were on very good terms with Gyurka, the insurer's son. He didn't work there, but the insurance company belonged to his father. When the Hungarian soldiers were marching in, the old man asked us to come over, because they had a better view. A few of us went over. My older brother was also there. Suddenly the bell rang in the anteroom. Three guys from Hungary and a local woman stood there in Hungarian gala-dress. They wanted to have a word with the owner. Well, uncle Farkas, the insurer, went there. He was Jewish. They asked him, 'Are there any Jews in here?' He said, 'Yes, there are, why?' The woman said, 'They are not allowed to go to the window, nor to watch'. Uncle Farkas lashed out saying that this was his office and he would allow anyone to look out of the window he wanted to. He told him off well. The woman, whom we knew very well, was really embarrassed. They probably told her to go with this guy and there was nothing she could do. She was a Christian, but her late husband was Jewish, and her daughter lives in Israel now.

This was the first manifestation of anti-Semitism, and it was a terrible slap in the face. We continued to watch though, and we saw Horthy [5] and his wife, but we had lost interest in the whole

thing. In the meantime dad got an official invitation from the city-hall to the grandstand, and he had to wear a dark suit, a Bocskay tie [This tie expressed Hungarian national consciousness at the time.] and his war decorations. They invited him as a guest, as one of the prominent figures of Marosvasarhely. Dad, but also we, felt this was normal, and he honored the invitation, of course. While this was happening, he was in the grandstand and had no idea that the Jews weren't allowed to watch.

Sandor [the son of Albert Mestitz] returned home from Temesvar during the Hungarian era in Marosvasarhely. In World War I he was the first lieutenant of the Szekler division, whose flag we concealed for 22 years in a dresser- drawer. But when the Hungarians came in 1940, everybody hung out the Hungarian flag. We dug out that flag - I think it even had the ensign of the army on it - and hung it out on the furniture store, but some hooligans said 'Look at the Jew, what a ragged flag he's hung out' - they snatched it off and the flag disappeared. Nobody asked what flag it was. Such things were happening, and it was painful to watch.

We were on good terms with all of our Romanian, Hungarian and German neighbors. Before the Hungarians came, I had a Romanian girlfriend, I felt sorry for her and helped her. She worked at the revenue office and she complained all the time how hard it was for her to go to work twice in the same afternoon from the railway-station, where she lived. I told her to come and have lunch with us. I gave her clothes, stockings, hand-bags and shoes; in a word I was pretty good to her.

When we knew the Hungarians were coming - I don't remember how we knew it, but it was in the air - and when I passed by the floral clock, Tulica was coming towards me. I said to her, 'Tulica, what's up with you, I haven't seen you in days?' She said, 'I'm packing up, I'm leaving here.' I asked, 'Why are you going away? You have your parents, your brothers and sisters and a job here!' She said, 'Because I don't want to be a minority.' I replied, 'Tulica, we have been a minority until now, too, and everyone who stays will still be one. Nobody was hurt for being a minority, and it will stay like that. Why do you want to leave?' Then she said, 'E altceva, cu voi jidani! [It's different for you, kikes!]' - she said it to my face, after all I'd done for her. She didn't say 'evreii' [Jews], but 'voi jidani' [you kikes], contemptuously. I said, 'Ai dreptate [you are right]' - and I turned around, and left her. I never called her again. She moved to Medgyes and I later heard that she got married, and when she was seven months pregnant, she and her child both died.

My father really liked the Hungarian casino and he always went there. Once, in the Hungarian era, when he was walking in, he bumped into an acquaintance of his, a regular, who told him there were some people from Hungary there; they were really mad that Jews were allowed to go there, and they asked how it could be permitted, and so on. My dad turned around and didn't go in that time. It seems the rumor spread because two or three days later a committee came to ask dad to go in, and asked him why he wouldn't go there, and told him not to listen to what others say. But dad didn't go. Before this incident he once went home and found my mother with eyes red from crying. He insisted so much that my mom told him that two commissioners had visited us and asked her to show them the stocks - because Jews always 'gather' things, don't they? - and she had to show them everything. My mom wasn't used to the tone they were taking and to the way they behaved. My dad got really mad. There were only these kinds of 'minor incidents' back then in 1940.

In the same year, three weeks after the Hungarians came, dad felt ill, so mom called over the doctor from next door. He said that an ECG examination was necessary. In those days there was only one ECG in the whole city, and it belonged to a private, non-Jewish doctor called Hanko. When we came back from the cinema with my sister-in-law, mom told us that dad had got sick, but by then dad was sitting down and reading. Around 10 or 11pm, when my older brother got back from the hospital, dad had a cramp, a heart attack and then died.

Dad was the president of the mill association, and when he died, the grist- millers got together and decided not to send Andras to Szeged to take the exams, but they examined him here in Marosvasarhely, and gave him the permit to operate the mill. A carriage went from house to house to gather the sacks of wheat. Everybody knew the Mestitz family would send someone, and they gave him the sacks. Each sack had a tag with the name of the owner on it. The thought of being cheated never even crossed our minds. The sacks went to the mill, the wheat was ground, and when everything was ready, they delivered the flour. I remember Andras sometimes pitched in and helped to deliver the sacks.

Before the 1940s, if you walked into any store everybody spoke Hungarian. In Marosvasarhely there was never any friction between the Germans, Romanians, Jews and Hungarians. After 1940 there were some minor incidents that should have warned us about what the future had in store for us. For example, we went into Hotel Transilvania because there was a public phone booth and my girlfriend wanted to make some calls to invite some friends to my house for the evening. A guy from Hungary came, and without any hesitation he opened the door of the booth saying, 'Enough Jewish talk, get out of here!' You could imagine what these things meant to us. After we left the phone booth, we told one of our friends, who was thought to be the most cowardly man on earth, what had happened. He just went over to the man and taught him some manners. His name was Geza Speter.

When they were taken to Auschwitz, this Geza managed to break open the wire on the windows and jump out at dawn, when he saw that nobody was watching. He jumped out and as the train pulled away, he saw that the other side of the field was filled with workers. There was an off-duty gendarme among them. The others begged him to 'leave the poor man alone', but he said that even if he was off-duty, he was still a gendarme, so he arrested him, took him in, beat the soles of his feet and called the station; the train was stopped, and he was put back on it. In the death-camp, when selected to go to the incinerator, he managed again to break open the wire and escape. He married a Christian lady, Eva Bucheld in Marosvasarhely, but later they divorced. Then he married a lady from Budapest. He got divorced again, and finally he met a journalist from Budapest who I think was also an illustrator. She was a fine woman. They emigrated together to Israel.

In 1942 Andras was summoned to Maramarossziget for forced labor. There was a family there to whom we could send packages or letters for Andras. The guys from the forced labor used to pick up from them whatever we sent. Andras, when he wanted to send us a letter, gave it to the family and they mailed it to us, so we could keep in touch. He was taken to concentration camp in Mauthausen, then to another one in Gunskirchen.

In 1943 I was in Budapest - I used to go there several times a year - and it was then when I heard for the first time that Jews were being taken off the trains. I didn't think I could also be in that

position, but I decided to come home anyway. Before we reached the border, the gendarmes came in requesting our documents. There were all kinds of documents, shopping certificates, and many other kinds of certificates. One gendarme told me everything was alright, but he kept my passport. I asked him, 'Why did you take away my passport?' He replied, 'Because you have to get off now and then your passport will be returned to you.' I said, 'Why should I get off when everything is alright?' I was very angry by then. He said, 'How should I know that you are who the documents say you are?' I said, 'If you don't believe it, in the other compartment I saw a city councilor from Marosvasarhely who used to be on good terms with my dad, I will call someone to prove it.' So I went to him and I said, 'Uncle Marci, please come with me, because they're messing around with me, and they want me to get off the train.' He stalled and backed out; he didn't want to come with me. Then I said, 'Thank you very much', and I left. I saw what it was all about: he wasn't Jewish and didn't want to get involved. I went back and there was nothing I could do, so I got off. It was a very long train and there were eight Jews on it who were forced to get off. I remember that a guy sat at the head of a table and slowly examined the passports. I said to him, 'For the love of God, please hurry, the train is about to depart!' He said, 'It's already moved off' - and indeed it was pulling away. I was mad because the trip had been very exhausting. I asked him, 'When is the next train?' 'At the same time tomorrow', the guy said. Then I left and decided not to continue my trip by train, but rather to go to Nagyvarad [it was near the border], because I had a cousin living there, Bozsi, the daughter of Uncle Ferenc. I thought I would go to a hotel and then visit her, and I decided to go home only after two or three days. I thought all this would stop by then.

In Nagyvarad I went to the hotel and took a room. When I got freshened up, I went to a coffee shop, where I knew my friend, a bank clerk, would be. I thought he'd be there for sure, and I wanted to ask him some advice, and I wanted to discuss with someone what had happened. I was very upset. The coffee shop was opposite the hotel. I walked in, and while I was waiting for my order to be taken, I glanced out at the terrace. There he was, sitting right in front of me. His name was Pali Kovacs, and he was a Jewish guy. I went to his table. He was very surprised, 'What brings you here, Juci?' 'Forced landing' I said. 'What do you mean?' he said, 'With an airplane?' 'No, not with a plane, from a train...'

In the meantime another of my acquaintances came there - he was a Christian, whom I had met at a party, and he kept writing letters to me, but I didn't reply because it wasn't my style. I thought he was familiar with these issues and told him what had happened. Then he said, 'Juci, my dear, I will write you a card, and if you ever encounter any problems, just show it and everything will be alright.' That convinced me that he was important. He hung out with us for a short while, but then he left. I asked Pali to come with me to my cousin's. I went there and they welcomed me. They invited me to stay there for another two or three days.

Then I got on the train without any luggage, only with a small hand-bag. I sent my trunk home by mail, because I thought that if I had to go through an incident like this again, I wouldn't have to lug my stuff around. The station was packed with detectives, walking up and down, watching people. I remained very calm and pretended I didn't want to get on the train, like I was just reading, and paying no attention to anything. The train came in, I waited for several minutes, and only got on with just a few minutes left, and came to Marosvasarhely. There were no further inconveniences, my trunk had arrived, and nothing was missing. But it was such a bad incident, that I couldn't forget.

In 1944, when we were already wearing the star [yellow star] 6, I didn't go anywhere. I was reluctant to walk on the street, I only went to work and back home. On Szent Gyorgy Street - in one of the first houses, where the Maros folk-dance group used to have its headquarters - in the Protestant school, a six-week red-cross course was organized, conducted by a doctor. Mom wanted me to attend it, because she said you never can tell when you might need it. They taught us to be nurses. I used to walk down Saros Street towards the school, and one day I met a friend, Eva Bucher. 'Where are you going?' she asked me. 'I'm going to the Protestant school, for the course,' I answered. 'I'll come with you,' she said. 'Please, Eva, don't come with me, I'm wearing this star, and I don't want to cause any inconvenience to anybody,' I explained. She was Christian, but her father might have been half-Jewish. She said, 'I'll come anyway!' She took me by the arm and came with me. I never forgot this.

There was a doctor called Metz who once told my brother Misi, 'I can't imagine what it will be like when we will meet, because I don't know how to greet you, how to behave! They regulate everything. I'm very confused, I don't even know how to greet you.' Misi answered, 'You know what? Don't talk to me at all!' - and left. In those days, people's pride was deeply wounded. By that time the Jews weren't going anywhere, not even to see other Jews.

On the afternoon of 2nd May 1944 I was working at the beauty salon and I knew that the Germans or the Hungarians would be at the Jewish council that afternoon to inform them of the rules they would have to obey. Then they said that it was forbidden to go out after 9pm. So I went directly to the sanatorium, to my brother, and told him that. Then I went home. Mom wasn't there and I remember that on the table there were two large boxes, containing the medication my brother used to receive from the manufacturers. Several days earlier the Jewish patients had been kicked out of the hospital, so they made a hospital out of a half-built church. Then they asked the people to donate, if they could, a bed, sheets, an armoire, medication, anything a hospital might need. The patients were there but nothing else. Misi gathered his medication and left them out, so when they came for them, they could take them away. I then put those medications one by one on the table and wondered what it would be like if I took them to forget about all these things. But I didn't know the medications since I very rarely took any. Mom came home and I told her what decrees had been established, and I said I didn't want to go through with this, 'Who knows what else awaits us?' We couldn't foresee what would really happen. I said, 'I want to die, and I want us to die together.' Mom said, 'No, my dear, we can't do that because I want to get to see Andras again.' But she never did.

On 3rd May a carriage arrived at the corner opposite, and gathered the Jews. There was a family there, and they had been asked whether there were any more Jews around. They said there were some in the other house. Only the two of us, mom and I, were at home. When we came downstairs, on the ground-floor entrance, we saw Annus Csiki, Boldizsar Csiki's grandmother, crying. She threw her arms around me, and then around mom and covered us with kisses. The gendarme told her, 'If you feel so sorry for them, you can come along!' And we were taken away on the carriage. When another carriage came for us, they said we had already been taken away, and this could easily have been a lie. We could have hidden easily. Auntie Csiki would have surely helped us, if we had asked her to.

The only good part about the whole thing was that my brother was left at home. Misi wasn't arrested because anyone who married a Christian before 1940 and also had a child, wasn't

deported. Once, when my sister-in-law was with her little girl, Anna, in the park or somewhere where they could play and freshen up, someone came to their house. The servant didn't want to let them in, but they forced their way in. The servant told them in vain that the family was exempt from the law and they had no right to barge in; they took some four little rugs anyway and left. We never had a chance of finding them, so we never looked into it. When dad died, mom insisted on Misi and his family moving into our house, upstairs. Later I found out that the gendarme insisted on them getting on the carriage, as well. He couldn't [or wouldn't] read all the documents my brother presented him to prove to him they didn't have to go. My brother didn't want to go, he persevered, as he wasn't a weak person, and he had a wife and a child. The gendarme gave in eventually. My brother hid for ten days or two weeks, helped by the Csikis.

They took mom and me to the brick-yard. The first night we slept in the open air. The brick-yard was packed with people. People were crying and moaning everywhere. They had all left their normal lives behind. We thought we would, at worst, be taken to a Hungarian labor camp. Even in our worst nightmares we couldn't have imagined what was to come... We didn't know anything... We didn't do anything... It was better not to think... We had some food, but I don't really remember what we ate, or whether we had any appetite. We began to consider everything as a boring journey, an unwanted situation. Then they began taking people to the gendarmerie and beating them until they said where their valuables were. They had a jeweler there who told them he knew everyone who bought anything from him. When there was somebody there already taking a beating, he told the gendarmes to keep on beating him because he had bought some jewels from him. After the war the guy was arrested, then he emigrated somewhere. After a month, on 2nd June, they took us away. We were in the second group; the first had been taken away several days earlier.

They made us walk to the railway-station in Marosvasarhely. We had to carry the luggage we were allowed, no bigger than a backpack. They only let us take this much because they told us we were allowed to take only a little of this and that. They hurried us because everything was urgent for them. My cousin Sandor, Albert Mestitz's son, managed to get a pole, and put my mom's bags on it. They carried them together because she couldn't do it by herself. They put us in a boxcar, along with 72 other people. We traveled for four days and four nights. We weren't allowed to leave the truck, and they didn't give us any water, or anything else. At some stations they opened the car's door for some reason, but they closed it quickly. The trip itself was miserable: we had to squat on the floor because we had nowhere else to sit.

There were many horrible things we found in Auschwitz. First some Polish men in zebra suits got on the trucks. They had already been working there, and if they saw a child, they immediately told their mother to leave him or her. They already knew why, of course. We didn't know it yet, and there was no mother who would have agreed to leave her child. They first told us to write our names on our rucksacks, so we could get them later. They examined our things and took us off the train. I still don't know how I got off that high railcar. They immediately put us in lines of five. When a line started to walk - the officers stood there with Mengele, the doctor - and everyone who looked weaker or older was sent to the left side by Mengele. [Editor's note: It's only a presumption that Mengele himself selected people.]

They told us that the children and the elderly would be taken by car to the showers, while we had to walk. I was happy that mom wouldn't have to carry her bag. When mom went to him, Mengele

saw that she had a small tumor on her neck, which she had several times asked to have removed by old Matyas Matyas from Kolozsvar. (But the doctor said: 'I won't do it, dear Ilonka, because it's just a small beauty mark and you never can tell what the glands of a woman are up to.' And, indeed, mom never had any problems because of it; she just had a mild fever from time to time.) Suddenly I noticed that mom, my girlfriend's mother and a seven-year old boy who lived in the same tent back in the brickyard, were going away. We didn't even have time to say goodbye. I asked a soldier where they were taking them. He said they were being taken to the showers by car. Their entire system was built on lies because if they had told us 'we are taking them away and you will never see them again', they would have had hysteria to face. This made everybody happy. So they took away mom and the others, and took us to the showers. We were just waiting to see them again somewhere, but it didn't happen; not then, nor later.

I spent seven and a half months in Auschwitz. I was a fairly slim, good- looking woman, but it seems I wasn't slim enough to be taken to the incinerator, nor strong enough to work in the factory. After a while a woman from Marosvasarhely was put to work in the wash-room - where people were washing up, that is, they should have been washing up - and I was sent there, as well. I worked there for about a month and a half. There were some 450 sinks for washing up, it was a long trough with faucets above. The bricks were red and it was very clean. We wiped it every single day so it looked perfect, and we were instructed to let nobody in to wash up, because if so much as a drop of water had fallen on the floor and the Germans had noticed it, it would have been the end of the world. So we were just cleaning it, and when we had some quiet moments, and our boss wasn't around, we cleaned ourselves up a bit.

I got acquainted with many Jews from Marosvasarhely in Auschwitz. I heard them mention my father's name, and I told them he had died. 'But how did it happen?' they asked. I said, 'Once he's dead, what difference does it make?' 'You had two brothers, what's with them?' they asked then. I told them that one was a butcher, and the other one a grist-miller. My older brother, Misi, was a surgeon and Andras got his permit to inherit and manage the mill. In those times in any upper-class family there had to be a manufacturer, a doctor or a bank manager. What was I supposed to do, tell them my father was a manufacturer, one of my brothers a surgeon and the other a mill owner? [Editor's note: Juci, modest as she is, didn't want to tell the ordinary people she was deported with, that she didn't belong to the poor working class, but to the upper-class.]

Sometimes we had food, but on other occasions we didn't, and we ate as and when we could. On several occasions they brought us food, but I didn't get to eat, or even if I could get any, I didn't have anything to put the food in. I had no plate, no spoon; I had nothing.

Those who had a cup preferred to eat three or four times rather then to lend it to someone else. People weren't nice at all, they had to fight for their lives. I finally got myself a spoon, but I don't know how, and later a cup, too. When they brought us hot coffee - I don't need to say what it was like - there were so many people around the large pot that there was no way through.

One day something happened to my throat, to my vocal chords. I could hardly talk. On the next day or the one after, we heard the female doctor was examining people in the main street of the camp. I went to her and asked what I should do. She kindly told me to eat more hot food because I might lose my voice for the rest of my life. I thought about where could I get something hot because people were killing each other for coffee.

I remembered that there was a girl whom I used to teach cosmetics for free back home in Marosvasarhely. She would surely get me something because she was getting a bigger ration of food. She had some sort of privileges amongst the prisoners. I went to her and asked her for some coffee because the doctor said I needed it. 'Oh, I got so little myself today,' she said, and I started to leave, 'but wait!' she continued -, 'I'll give you some of mine.' And she poured some coffee in my cup, filling it half-full. She had a whole pot. I never went to her again, nor to others. Then I got better and never felt any after-effects.

The selections didn't frighten us at all. The rumors ran that they put sedatives in our food, but we thought it was all a fairy-tale and didn't believe a thing. But there were other things we didn't believe. We wouldn't believe anything until it was proved to be true.

Later I heard from a girlfriend from Budapest, who was working in the kitchen, that they were putting some powder in the meals, because it would have been impossible to keep so many women quiet without sedatives. The Germans had anticipated this, as they had with everything. They anticipated and prepared everything, and they knew how people were going to react.

I was sent to sweep the streets for a week. I remember that as I was sweeping, the guards were standing there and chatting, and they didn't even notice me. One preferred not to be noticed, otherwise one could end up having problems or being punished.

Then I recalled the time I was sitting with one of my suitors, a chief engineer, several years earlier, on Marguerite Island, in Budapest. There was a man sweeping and picking up the fallen leaves, and we didn't pay any attention to him, we didn't really bother about him. This was the same scene, just the other way around. This was a minor thing really, but it stuck in my mind.

Then we had to do some weaving using plastic and fabric. We had to weave them to be very strong. When we finished, two really big German blockheads came in and stretched them to see whether they were strong enough. How could I have made something they couldn't tear apart?

Fortunately, they didn't come to me, but they managed to tear apart some ropes. If so, they stripped the unfortunate responsible and put her naked out in front of the door, in the January cold, for hours.

After a while, towards the end, they put me to work with French women. There I also had to do some weaving. I listened to them as they were speaking, but didn't understand a thing. After half a day I asked for some scissors in French. One of them looked at me and said, 'Do you speak French?' I said, 'I thought I spoke French, but since listening to you I found out I don't.' I recalled that dad used to tease me after I came home from language classes, 'Speak with the Madame, use the language you are learning because you never know whether you'll find anybody who understands you.' These French women began laughing, because it turned out they were all speaking the dialects of their own regions. From then on we talked in French, and I got on very well.

From Auschwitz we were taken to Birkenau. There were many wooden barracks there. They had probably been initially built for horses, because the stable fittings were still on the walls. Along the inside wall of the barracks there was a radiator, but it was never heated, not even on the coldest days. There was no heating at all, and there was nothing we could cover ourselves with.

After 18th January they took us to Ravensbruck. This at least wasn't a death-camp. Ravensbruck always reminds me of the rudeness of a female doctor. By the time we arrived there my shoes had been stolen, but I had managed to get some wooden shoes, much larger than my feet, so I lined them with rags. I had to wear those open shoes in the winter and they hurt my feet, which were all covered with sores. When we arrived there, I was happy to hear that we must wash up and we'd be able to see a doctor.

I washed my feet really clean and went to her for something to heal the sores more rapidly. She said those were not scabs, but dirt. She took a clip, grabbed my scab by its side and ripped it off, so the flesh was visible. We didn't do anything at Ravensbruck, apart from the time spent looking for lice on our own clothes. I only spent four weeks there. I even remember that we were sleeping four in a bed - you can imagine how 'fat' we must have been, if there was room for four of us. I slept beside a Polish girl, and my clothes looked so miserable she pitied me and gave me a sweater before they sent us off again. I had never had lice until then.

Then they took us Malchow, to a small town. [Malcwow was a sub-camp of the Ravensbruck concentration camp.] Not far from the town there was a camp. They took us there. While we were walking across the town, the local Germans stood at the window smirking and laughing, and had fun watching us. The way we looked, they had something to laugh about. After we got out of the town, we went onto the road. Those who received us in the camp examined everyone for lice. It turned out I had lice.

They had been on the sweater the Polish girl had given me. Then they separated everyone with lice, but instead of sending us to get washed, they put us in barracks with others who also had lice. The atmosphere was much more humane, though. That's what I remember about Malchow. When we were taken away from there, the locals had been affected by the course of the war; there were empty houses, and those who remained there looked at us with their heads bowed, depressed. The exultation had disappeared.

They sent us off to Magdeburg, but we didn't know where we would end up. We had no food for six days. The train stopped in Magdeburg and they handed a letter to a woman who was then in charge of us. The letter probably said that they had to retreat because they were really cornered as the Americans and Russians were closing in.

I remember that the station was bombed. We were some 100 meters from the station and it was beautiful [the play of light] - if only we had been there just to watch it... It was a beautiful sight, but the truck was so packed, we couldn't move. We couldn't even raise our hands.

They left us there because I guess they thought this way they wouldn't be bombed. Shortly after the bombings stopped, the train started off, and we traveled quite a while. Then we got off and continued on foot.

While walking a dog bit my leg, so I couldn't really walk, plus I was tired. One of the more decent soldiers put me on the carriage that was carrying their things. When we arrived at a field that was surrounded by a fence, and even had a gate, they took me off the carriage and sent me to the closest group standing by.

They began asking me why I had come to their group, and told me to go away. So I joined a mother from Budapest and her daughter. When we had to walk again, they told us that anyone who felt they couldn't go further should stay put because there was a truck coming to take them away somewhere. We knew the story all too well, but I still wanted to stay there because my leg was hurting very much. I wanted to put an end to everything.

This lady with her daughter wouldn't let me, 'You are coming with us! Take my arm and you'll be able to walk just like us.' I took her by the arm and walked, but after a while I felt it was too much for me. Then the girl told me, 'Juci, don't drag mom, let's walk in one line.' When she asked me the second time, I said I would fall behind. I figured I would slowly fall behind, and when I was the last one in the group, there would be nobody there.

I managed to do that and I collapsed on purpose, but two German soldiers came to me and told me in German, 'Los, weiter machen! Come on, keep it up!' - this had always been their motto. I didn't want to get up, but after a while I had to because they made me. I walked a few steps and then I said I wouldn't go any further, and told them to shoot me - I am sure they didn't shoot me, merely because I told them to do so. And because they knew the whole fuss, the war was coming to an end. In the next village - I don't know what it was called - the soldiers handed me over to the mayor.

That day I slept in the open air at the mayor's house, on the doorstep. Next day he took me to the outskirts of the village and told me that eight miles from there was some town called Nuremberg, and I should report to the police there.

I walked and walked, I was half-asleep, and I probably had a high fever. I walked onto a field to get some potatoes, but I was so tired that I fell asleep. When I woke up, I had no idea in which direction I was going or where I had come from. I've always been a fatalist, so I decided to start walking in one direction. After a while I sat down and couldn't get up anymore. There was a German man close by, and then another five men came from the nearby village.

They thought there was a spy sitting there. They didn't know that I wasn't spying, just crawling. They told me to get up and walk. But I wasn't able to stand up, let alone walk. They tried to put me back on my feet, but when they saw I kept collapsing again, one of them brought a small hand-cart and put me on it - there was even a pillow on it - and this man took me to his home. He didn't let me into his house, of course, but took me to the barn.

They made some kind of a camp-bed there, stuffed it with straw and covered it. They put a pillow and a blanket on top, and laid me there. Each member of his family brought me something to eat, and I ate everything. Then the man disappeared for a while, but then he suddenly showed up again later.

He cooked flour soup and brought me some in a two-liter pot. I thought it really delicious because it was the first hot meal I had for quite a while. The next day I got the runs because I had eaten too much. I stayed there for three weeks or so, but in the last week they let me into the house, washed me and gave me some clothes. They were really nice people. The guy was called Alex Brux. I don't know what he was doing for a living, but I don't think the Germans trusted him because he was a communist. This all took place in a village called Nischkau. The guy took me on a small carriage to a hospital eight kilometers from there. His wife and child came along.

From there I was taken to another hospital, where patients with spotted disease were treated. I began to show similar symptoms to theirs, and when my hair began falling out in clumps, I knew I had a problem, I had caught the disease. The only good thing was that the doctor was a man from Szatmarnemeti. His half-brother, Bandi Widder the pharmacist, was one of our best friends back in Marosvasarhely. His name was Nandi Gunter, and he knew my last name because when the chairs were upside down on the table as they were cleaning up at his half-brother's, there on the underside of the chairs was the name of our furniture store: Mestitz Mihaly and Sons.

There was no medicine in the hospital, nor anything else, but he did everything he could medically. He always gave me some of his own vitamins. I shared them, of course, with a little woman I was on good terms with. She lived in Budapest, she was a seamstress, and was of half-Czech origin. We asked how long we had to stay there, why wouldn't they let us go home?. The Romanians said that although my home was now on Romanian soil [that is, Northern Transylvania was again under Romanian ruling after WWII was over], the Hungarians were the ones who had taken us away, so they should bring us back. The Hungarians said that although they had taken us away, now we would have to go to Romania, so the Romanians should bring us home.

There was a Czech captain there who decided to take his soldiers home and he managed to get a bus. They offered to get anybody else Czech home. My little friend told me she would say she's going to the Czech Republic, but she wouldn't leave me, so she told me to say I'm Czech too. It wasn't a very nice thing to do, but in those conditions I think it was quite appropriate, and we had no documents we could show to prove it. Thus I was put on the list, too. We were on the bus by 9am already, but by the time they finished packing and arranged the administrative problems it was 4pm, and only then did we start off.

When we left the German border, I spat on the floor, and the bus suddenly stopped. The fear and frights we had lived through got to me - I thought we stopped because I had spat. It turned out it had stopped because a Czech professor, who was traveling with us, wanted to make a speech. We didn't understand a word he said, but we cried. After that, one of the soldiers, who had an accordion, played the Czech national anthem. We got off in Prague.

We stayed there for approximately six days. There was a Romanian repatriation office in Prague, and I found out that my brother had been seen in Marosvasarhely with his Italian wife and their daughter.

From Prague we went to Budapest on a fully packed train. Nobody paid for the tickets, at least we didn't. We just got on the train, and nobody asked for our tickets. People were going home from the front and they had nothing they could pay the fare with. Some of them first climbed on the top of the cars and got inside the train through the windows. A Russian soldier came into our compartment through the window. He was probably a member of the NKVD [7], some kind of Russian secret police. He was very kind though; he sat with us and talked to us. Fortunately he protected us from the insults of the Russian soldiers.

In Budapest it turned out that my younger brother had gone home several weeks earlier. There was a school in Bethlen Square were everybody had to register, and we went there in large groups. There, when they wrote my name, one of them said to the other, 'Wasn't there someone with the same name who already went home?' That's how I found out that Andras had gone home, he was already on that list. We came by train to Kolozsvar and when we wanted to get on, some guys from

Marosvasarhely told us not to because it would go the other way around, through Szaszregen, and we should take the bus. I knew I had a home, and someone was waiting for me there, and that was fabulous.

We came to Marosvasarhely with a lorry they called a bus; its door was so high they had to put a ladder for me to be able to get on it. In Kolozsvar someone warned me not to go to our old house, from which they had deported us, but to the one on Koteles Street. After the deportations the houses on Koteles Street emptied. While we were still away, my older brother moved to Koteles Street into another house, two houses away from where our family had lived before. He opened a consulting room on the ground floor, and he continued to work at the sanatorium. I arrived home in late July 1945. I was amongst the few who came home and found their siblings. Unfortunately my mother wasn't there.

It was quite dark when we got there and I saw that in the house they mentioned the window was open, and the light was on, and I heard the sort of whistle only my two brothers and I used to have. This was an Italian student whistle my older brother 'imported' for us and we always used it to call each other. When I heard the whistle, I stopped and listened for what was going on. [It was Andras whistling under the window.] Then I heard the voice of my sister-in-law coming from the window, asking my brother in Italian what was happening. He said he had been waiting for Juci but she hadn't come. It turned out that he had waited for me at the sanatorium that day because those who came home were taken there. Then I went to Andras - he couldn't see me, but the way I looked, he couldn't possibly have recognized me - I took him by the arm and said, 'Buona sera signore'. He looked at me and screamed so loud that I think everybody in the whole street came out. Clara almost fell out the window and hurried to open the gate. When Anna, their daughter saw me, she said, 'You're back? I already waited for you tomorrow.' She meant to say yesterday.

Clara then phoned Misi, my older brother. He was called out of an operation. Is it something important? he asked. Nothing extraordinary, just that Juci came home. He too began screaming, handed over the operation and came home. I remember I related my story and talked with them all night long, and they laughed when I told them that back in the camp I told someone Misi was a butcher and Andras a grist-miller.

In the concentration camp they mistreated Andras, just like in any other camp, but when the situation eased up a little he was appointed as leader of a small group. But we never heard of him not being nice. Andras always had excellent ideas and was very inventive.

When I met him in 1945 he was podgy, because he had been set free by the Americans. [The Americans fed up the deported ones whom they set free.] When Andras came home the furniture store was still operating. The mill also kept on working for a year and a half until the nationalization [8] in 1948. Andras signed for it and handed it over. The furniture store was nationalized in 1949.

Then he had to look for something else to do in order to make a living. He was thrown out of every job he had when they found out who his father was. Then he did some accounting and anything that came along. At the beginning he made wooden toy-horses for the children. Then, and I don't know whether it was his or the bookbinder's idea, but they sorted and bound the documents of different companies. Because the documents weren't properly sorted and bound, it turned out to be a very profitable business, and companies were lining up for their services. In 1950 he married Julia Kiss, a Calvinist.

- **Post war**

When I came home, I immediately continued my work as cosmetician. The furniture was still there, but everything they could move had been taken away. My older brother told me he received a call during the war that someone had broken into the salon and stolen a load of things. Then they went there, and the servant, my brother and my sister-in-law brought home what was left on a carriage. Misi said, 'Juci dear, go to the second floor, there are some of your glass things there.

Go into the basement ..., go to the loft....' And so I found all the things they'd carried home. From the first moment I arrived, I opened my beauty salon on the main square, in the same place it had been previously, because I managed to get it back. We furnished it very stylishly and strangely enough, it went very well. I don't remember if they asked me about Auschwitz, but they must have.

After the nationalization, when they took away the place, we brought the beauty treatment equipment home. Our lobby was quite large and we also put a chair there. At that time I had no assistant or apprentice and could only serve one customer at a time.

After 1960 I was hired by the Higiena co- operative society: in those days every hairdressing and beauty salon pertained to Higiena. First I worked on Bolyai Street, where there were six people both in the morning and the afternoon shift. It wasn't very profitable with that many workers, so they split the group and moved me to Kossuth Street, where we only worked three per shift. Then I was moved to the Fashion House, and retired from there in 1974.

Carlo, Misi's son, was born in 1946. In 1947 they managed to get the documents and moved away for good to Clara's parents in Bologna, Italy. They bought a beautiful house downtown. Misi's father-in-law built a consulting room behind his pharmacy, and he examined people there for a while, but Misi wasn't allowed to be a surgeon until he became an Italian citizen. He was doing very well.

Then he found out that the Italian laws didn't apply in Bologna, so he could have been a surgeon in hospital. But then he changed his mind and abandoned his career as a surgeon because he was doing so well as an internal specialist. In the mornings he used to work somewhere, while in the afternoons he worked at his practice inside the building of the city hall, upstairs. In 1994 he had a heart attack and died.

I met my first husband, Jeno Schonbrunn, at a motorcyclist ball. My younger brother was a big motorcycle fan, he really liked to ride them, and was amongst the organizers. It took place in the main hall of the Apollo restaurant. Jeno came to me and sat beside me. He had already had some rounds and was tipsy, he had just got back from Russian captivity. He'd been a prisoner for eight years somewhere in Ukraine. He was a Jew from Marosvasarhely, but I don't know much about his family.

Before the war he graduated from dental technician school and worked a while. While in captivity he discovered that if he spoke Russian, he would be treated better, so he entered a local anti-fascist school. The way the Russians are, they told him that if he was a dental technician, then he was a dentist, and if he was a dentist, then he was a doctor, so they put him in charge of a hospital.

When he came home, he would have joined the Party straightaway - since he finished the anti-fascist school - but nobody was admitted then, since the door of the Party was closed. He asked to be admitted to the hospital in Marosvasarhely. They told him they would, but that they had to obtain a permit from Bucharest.

When we met in Marosvasarhely he was crazy about me, but I didn't pay him any attention. He used to smother me in flowers all the time, the previous ones didn't even have time to fade before he brought me fresh ones. When we had something going on he always came along, but I wasn't very interested in him.

One day a girlfriend invited me to Kolozsvar, and I decided I would pay her a visit. Jeno told me he heard there was some race there, so he came along, too. Then I told him 'nicely', 'I'm not going to Kolozsvar to be with you.' When I went away I began to regret what I had said, and during those ten days I fell deeply in love with Jeno.

In 1950 we had our wedding but, only at the city hall. I had previously gone to Temesvar, and during that week he was called three times to Bucharest where they wanted to prevent him from marrying me, because I was the child of an industrialist. The last time he went there they only asked him, 'Te-ai razgandit, tovarasul Schonbrunn?' [Have you reconsidered, comrade Schonbrunn?'] He said no. They told him he couldn't continue to educate the youth if he married me. We got married in secret, we went to the registrar and agreed to go there on Friday at noon and get married quickly, so that nobody would know anything about it. 'If I had known I would marry you' - he used to joke - 'then I wouldn't have helped to put out the fire when the factory was burning.' [Jeno helped to put out the fire in the 1920s, when the Mestitz furniture factory was set on fire for the third time.]

In the meantime Jeno met the party secretary, but he was an old friend of his and Jeno didn't know he was a party secretary. After they greeted each other with kisses and much delight and all that, the guy told him - when he heard that his job wasn't secure yet - that they would make him Director of the Sports Department of the city.

He came to love it very much there because he always was a great sportsman, and he stayed there for a long time. One day he came to me saying he had to go to Bucharest to a meeting because there was nobody else they could send there, so he had to go. It was a meeting where they decided who were unwanted by the communists and fired them from their jobs on the spot, avoiding any scandal. When my husband came home he told me, 'Somebody in the family lost their job.' It wasn't him though, but Andras and his family.

They were on their summer holiday by the sea then, and when they came back they had no jobs anymore. When he was fired, Andras was working as an accountant for the army. Jeno was slowly advanced to organize the Vointa sports club, and he became a sports leader. He worked in the sports center downtown, and managed the Vointa sports center. He returned to the dental clinic only after another ten years or so.

Jeno wasn't religious at all. His family might have been religious, but not him. However, we always went to the synagogue on the high holidays. We still had our old Jewish friends, and we made some new friends, too, this wasn't a problem. I'm sure there was a Jewish community in the 1950s, but we had no knowledge of it. We only wanted to have a comfortable life and to prove especially to

ourselves, but to the others, too, that we were alive.

I wasn't interested in politics at all. Even if you weren't interested in politics, you could see what kind of life it provided. Our life wasn't easy during the communist era. I totally disagreed with communism. Anybody who grew up having all the opportunities and everything I had, couldn't have liked the cage they were imprisoned in, being told what they could and couldn't have, what they could and couldn't do, and what was and wasn't allowed.

During the communist era there were no problems to be solved between the ethnic groups, because in Marosvasarhely there weren't any problems of that kind, either before, or after World War II. I didn't really consider emigrating. We had to renounce any foreign connections. I remember that in the résumé I handed in to the Party, I didn't mention speaking any other foreign languages, besides Romanian, although I spoke English, French, German and Italian. It wasn't a good thing to speak foreign languages. If someone had been to America, it was a black mark.

After Auschwitz I wasn't able to bear a child to full term; I was in the seventh month when I miscarried. Julia, Andras' wife was pregnant too, with a difference of two months between us, with Pocok. Their child, Istvan, but just called Pocok, was born in 1955. He was baptized a Calvinist, and considers himself a Calvinist. I feel as if he were my child, a little bit too.

We lived in our four-bedroom apartment on Koteles Street, each family in a separate room. I lived with Jeno in one of them, Andras and his family lived in another one, then there was Gyula Deutsch and his family - the son of mom's older sister, Margit - and in the last one, there was another couple.

Buba, as we called Gyula, built a house, and they moved in there. When they moved out, the mother of Andras' wife, Julia, moved into their room. We shared the kitchen, but everybody cooked for themselves. Each of us had their chores: one cleaned the stove, one washed the dishes and another cooked. They always made fun of me when I went into the kitchen, because I used to say, 'Everybody get away from the stove, it's my turn.' [Juci was joking that they should let her get to the stove.] For example, when someone wanted to have supper or lunch, they used to say, 'So, are you coming?' Anyone who wanted, went to eat, the rest didn't, but usually we all ate together.

Ilonka Vas, a woman from Szekelykal, used to come to our house to clean, and always brought us some eggs, or something. She convinced me to take part in the lottery. We told her we wouldn't give that much money - it cost 1700 lei - so four of us bought a ticket together: her, me and the wife and mother-in-law of my younger brother Andras .

In 1956 we won a German motorcycle. In Romania this was the first object one could win in the lottery, until then they had only given away money. In the same year I won two more times in the lottery, once 900 lei, and once 400 or 450 lei.

At the same time, Andras went to Bucharest to buy himself a small motorcycle, because he had no money for a big one. I remember he gathered all the money in the house, some 14,000 lei. He didn't find a motorcycle he liked, there were only big and used ones. In Segesvar, an acquaintance asked him, 'So, what do you say, your sister has won a motorcycle in the lottery!' He was so happy when he came home. He then bought the motorcycle from us, that is, he gave us some money for it.

We always celebrated birthdays together and used to give each other presents. However, we didn't observe the Jewish, nor the Christian holidays. Only at Christmas we put up a Christmas tree for the sake of the son of my brother, Pocok. We didn't celebrate any of the communist holidays, apart from the obligatory street processions. There were occasions when we celebrated 1st May, but we were only fooling around.

Once Jeno and I went out for supper somewhere and came home early. It was dark in the house, and we thought everybody was already asleep. When we came in, the light was suddenly turned on, and they came in hand in hand and started dancing around us, like fools. They were singing: 'Fol fol ti rabjai a foldnek...' ['Arise, ye starvelings, from your slumbers...', from the Socialist Internationale]. They only sang it to make fun of us.

When they stopped we looked around and saw our room had been decorated. We laughed our heads off. There was a couch there, a glass-case and, next to that, another couch. Mom had a price of crochet of two doves. The doves were placed above the glass-case, with a piece of red paper underneath, to highlight them. In front of the glass-case there was a table covered with a red blanket, with a jug of water and a glass on it, in case someone wanted to make a speech.

I had made the beds before we left because I didn't know when we would come home, and to spare us that effort. The quilt was tucked up on the bed, and pinned on to the sheet with a thousand stickpins, cut out of red paper: there was the phrase 'Long live 1st May' in Romanian and Hungarian. The letters and the numbers were all cut out and pinned on to the bedsheet. There was something on the pillow, too. The same thing was on Jeno's bed. This started off a party that lasted until 6 in the morning. We had a lot of fun.

In 1960 they simply took our apartment. They came, inspected the courtyard, then they wanted to come in and see the apartment. I said: 'Why are you looking at our place? Nobody is going anywhere from here.' But it was like talking to the wind - the most annoying thing was that they ignored me completely. After all I'd been through [during the war], I thought I was somebody.

Then I grabbed the guy's arm and shook him, 'Tovarasi, de aici nimeni nu pleaca' [Comrades, nobody will go away from here.]. He shook himself, like dogs do when they are wet, and said nothing. I didn't know that one of those five men wanted to move in - and the group included the party secretary and the deputy secretary.

Next day, when I came home, Jeno was sitting with a man I had already seen before. He was there for the house and said, 'I'll bring a car and take you to see what we are willing to give you in exchange for your apartment. And everybody who lives here will get a separate new home.'

They showed us six apartments, but none of them were to our liking. Then they showed us a full comfort two-bedroom apartment above Arta cinema [on the main square], which was empty and nobody lived there before, since it was newly built. That night Jeno and I gave the matter some thought.

In the spring of 1960 they threw us out of our home, and Andras' family emigrated to Bologna that spring. Jeno had a heart attack early that spring. We moved into our new home, but everything seemed very small to me, after all the big and spacious places I'd lived in before.

In the 1950s Andras requested to be allowed to emigrate to Italy. We agreed with Andras to go with them, initially to my older brother's place, and then we would have decided what to do next. As Andras' family already had four members - they already had two children - and they were going to Misi's father-in-law, we couldn't really go together. In 1960 he got permission and they emigrated to Bologna. My husband didn't want to go because, he said, he had already spent eight years in captivity and he didn't want to go; he had been away from home enough. That's how I stayed here, although all my girlfriends told me I would be the first one to go.

Misi was there in Bologna and provided everything for Andras: he prepared an apartment for them. After two months, Misi got a job at a motorcycle factory as an accountant, and found an error in the calculations they had been looking for, for two years. He was very appreciated and well-paid. In those days Italy was living through the cold war and so he said he didn't want to stay there.

He left the company after he had been there for ten months, because he registered to emigrate to America or Canada: he said he would go to whichever one gave him the answer sooner. Fortunately it was America. They moved to Minneapolis in 1961. He is still in accounting, and used to have an accounting office at home.

There were two non-Jewish female employees working for him who went from company to company and only came to him if there was something urgent. Julia always liked Jews, she preferred to go to the synagogue with Andras whenever he went, she didn't go to the Protestant church much. Later, when it was more difficult for Andras to walk, they stopped going at all.

Pocok was 18 or 20 when he came to visit me. He began asking some things about the family, and I started telling the stories. 'Just a minute', he said, then took a piece of paper, a pencil, and began making notes. He asked me question after question. 'What a good memory you have', he said.

When he went home, he showed everything to his father and Andras said they should look into it, and should draw up the family tree, because he wanted to do it for Pocok's children. Though he didn't have any yet.

Then Andras gathered the raw data about each member of the entire family for eight or nine years, and he even used newspaper ads in his search. Later, he made a big scrapbook about the Mestitz and Laszlo families.

I had never been a member of the Party and nor was Jeno. When he came home after the war he wanted to join it, but it wasn't possible yet, then he met me, and gave up the idea. In the 1960s and 70s we always had a problem with my suspect origins. They always brought up my industrialist background, though later they mostly ignored it. Jeno was an easygoing, very good man. He always had to fraternize with the inspectors, who came to our place for supper. We had a slightly better life than the rest. I retired just a few years before my first husband died. I was glad I retired, because Jeno was quite sick; he was in bed all the time and so I could take care of him. He had problems with his lungs, but he didn't suffer too much, only on his last day. He died in 1977.

I had known my second husband, Aladar Scheiner, for ages. I was Aladar's third wife. Magda Roth, Magdus, a distinguished, delicate and very sweet lady was his second wife. She was originally from Temesvar; her father worked as a railway engineer. She too was married three times.

Aladar married her after the deportations, and they lived together for 30 years. She was previously married to my cousin, Sandor Mestitz. I think she divorced her first husband for Sandor, whom she met in Temesvar. They came home to Marosvasarhely from Temesvar, so they could live as Hungarians, but then they deported all of us. Magdus returned, Sandor did not.

Magdus too 'began her career' in Auschwitz, though I don't know where they took her after that. Then she married Aladar. Magdus also died in 1977. Six weeks after Jeno's death, when I was going to have lunch, I met Aladar on the way. 'Where are you going?' I said, 'To have lunch.' Then he asked, 'Can I come with you?' I'll never forget that after lunch he said to me he knew very well, it wasn't the right time, nor very nice of him to say it, but he felt he had to tell me that if I ever thought of remarrying, to take him into consideration. I was shocked that he could come up with something like that only six weeks after my husband died and seven weeks after his wife passed away.

When World War I broke out, Aladar's family moved to Budapest. I don't know for sure if they were six or seven siblings. He was the oldest son and he arranged everything for the family, he was the only help for their parents. There were other boys in the family, but none of them were like him. I don't know how they came back from Budapest to Marosvasarhely. After the war Aladar worked as a timber merchant in Gyergyo. When the permits were withdrawn, he could keep his because the workers stood beside him saying he was demanding, but fair. He was summoned for forced labor and spent six years in captivity. After the forced labor he came back to Marosvasarhely and did accounting for 16 companies. I don't know where he learned accounting. He only graduated from high-school, and he said his father didn't even know which school he attended.

In the 1960s he was hired by the Jewish community of Marosvasarhely. He had probably had some previous ties with the community because they asked him to be the president. Aladar was already the president there when I married him in 1978.

He was president for twenty years. On high holidays he went earlier to the synagogue then I did, but this was never a problem. Aladar never bothered about me being religious or not, and this was a very good thing because I was very weak on Jewish issues. I never kept a kosher household, although he was the president of the Jewish community. But neither did Magdus, his previous wife. The only thing we did was that we went to the synagogue on holidays. Aladar, of course, had to go there more often, and he was at the community office all the time.

On Yom Kippur we fasted, though. Despite the fact that one only has to fast until the age of seventy, and after that only for half a day, my husband always observed it. I fasted, too. On Yom Kippur I fasted even while I was in the camp. And how my acquaintances and friends scolded me for it - saying, 'haven't we fasted enough? You have to fast now, too?' because then, by some chance, we actually had the opportunity to eat. I told them I would still fast.

After we came home, my brother Andras asked me on the first holiday, 'Are you fasting?' 'Yes,' I said, 'I will always fast in memory of my parents.' He said that he would fast too, then, otherwise he wouldn't have fasted at all. Furthermore, my first husband, who never really fasted, began fasting after we met.

When Aladar turned eighty, in 1984, he resigned - I insisted on him resigning. Then he persuaded Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen 9 to appoint Bernat Sauber as president because he was the only one

who was competent. [Editor's note: In 2003 Bernat Sauber is still the president of the Jewish community in Marosvasarhely.]

During the communist era there were times when we didn't have any money, all of us owed each other some, and towards Christmas half of the city owed money to the other half. Still, I made good money with my cosmetic work, because I always had many customers. My husband too had a pretty good salary, then a decent pension, and we had a relatively good life, given the circumstances, when most of the people had no money at all.

During the communist era I traveled abroad quite a lot compared to the average citizen. My first husband didn't like to travel at all, so in the 1970s I traveled pretty much alone. And this way I could get a permit more easily. They never granted it when you requested it, but when you expected it the least. The first time I went to America in 1968, then to Italy in 1972 and 1975. I went to Italy nine times, which was quite amazing during the communist era. In 1983 and 1989 I went to America with Aladar, and in 1989 we spent the high holidays there at my brother's. I've been to Israel two or three times, but I don't remember exactly when.

At home, we went with Aladar to Felix spa each spring. He really loved this place. [Felix spa is in the western part of Romania, near the Hungarian border. During the communist era many local Hungarians went there to spend the summer holiday, because they could 'steal' the TV broadcast from Hungary, since there was no TV broadcast in Hungarian in Romania.] When we first went there, I couldn't imagine what I could do there, but I came to like the place so much that I couldn't wait to go there again. [Even after her husband died, Juci continues to go there, and the employees know her very well.]

Since 1989 [the Romanian Revolution of 1989] 10 my life hasn't really changed: I am retired. Of course, our community was very pleased with the events. I had Jewish friends but others, as well. The truth is that everybody was relieved. In the communist era nobody really liked to be told where to go and how many steps you are allowed to take. But one had to comply because if you didn't play along, you were instantly punished. Neither of my husbands was a party member, and we never took part in anything political.

Aladar died in 1994, at the age of 90. Then I received the reparations Hungary paid to him, because he had been imprisoned in Russia [Editor's note: after 1990 the Hungarian government compensated everyone who had been a prisoner of war in Russia.] Then I also received reparations for his forced labor years. The reparations payment for me was a far lesser amount.

I have always felt I've had a beautiful life. Most of the people were very friendly and nice to me. My parents loved me, I got along very well with my brothers and sisters and I am on good terms with everybody. All my life I've never been left alone, I had a big family and many friends. Now I'm waiting for a call from either my sister-in-law from Bologna, or my brother from America. He calls me every Saturday.

- **Glossary:**

1 Hungarian era (1940-1944)

The expression Hungarian era refers to the period between 30 August 1940 - 15 October 1944 in Transylvania. As a result of the Trianon peace treaties in 1920 the eastern part of Hungary (Maramures, Partium, Banat, Transylvania) was annexed to Romania. Two million inhabitants of Hungarian nationality came under Romanian rule.
In the summer of 1940, under pressure from Berlin and Rome, the Romanian government agreed to return Northern Transylvania, where the majority of the Hungarians lived, to Hungary. The anti-Jewish laws introduced in 1938 and 1939 in Hungary were also applied in Northern Transylvania.

Following the German occupation of Hungary on 19th March 1944, Jews from Northern Transylvania were deported to and killed in concentration camps along with Jews from all over Hungary except for Budapest. Northern Transylvania belonged to Hungary until the fall of 1944, when the Soviet troops entered and introduced a regime of military administration that sustained local autonomy.

The military administration ended on 9th March 1945 when the Romanian administration was reintroduced in all the Western territories lost in 1940 - as a reward for the fact that Romania formed the first communist-led government in the region.

2 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 (Voivodina, 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.

3 Neolog Jewry

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

4 Kiss, Jozsef (1843-1921)

One of the most important Hungarian Jewish poets. He was the first professed Jew who became

famous as a Hungarian poet. His early poems followed the tradition of 19th-century Hungarian verse, although their heroes were assimilating Jews rather than Hungarian nobles and peasants. He broke new grounds with poems about social change, moral degeneration, and the breakdown of traditional Jewish family life.
In other poems he described the cruelty of economic life in the city. He was attracted by revolutionary ideas but he envisioned the revolution in the distant future and was shocked when the Hungarian Soviet Republic was established in Hungary in 1918. He did not support it any longer.

Anti- Semitism is a recurring motif in his poems. In 1890, with the backing of some friends, he launched a successful literary journal called A Het [the Week], and as its editor he gained a reputation as a leading figure in Hungarian literature.

5 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.

6 Yellow star in Romania

On 8th July 1941, Hitler decided that all Jews from the age of 6 from the Eastern territories had to wear the Star of David, made of yellow cloth and sewed onto the left side of their clothes. The Romanian Ministry of Internal Affairs introduced this 'law' on 10th September 1941. Strangely enough, Marshal Antonescu made a decision on that very day ordering Jews not to wear the yellow star. Because of these contradicting orders, this 'law' was only implemented in a few counties in Bukovina and Bessarabia, and Jews there were forced to wear the yellow star.

7 NKVD

People's Committee of Internal Affairs; it took over from the GPU, the state security agency, in 1934.

8 Nationalization in Romania

The nationalization of industry and natural resources in Romania was laid down by the law of 11th June 1948. It was correlated with the forced collectivization of agriculture and the introduction of

planned economy.

9 Rosen, Moses (1912-1994)

Chief Rabbi of Romania and the president of the Association of Jewish Religious Communities during communism.

10 Romanian Revolution of 1989

In December 1989, a revolt in Romania deposed the communist dictator Ceausescu. Anti-government violence started in Timisoara and spread to other cities. When army units joined the uprising, Ceausescu fled, but he was captured and executed on 25th December along with his wife. A provisional government was established, with Ion Iliescu, a former Communist Party official, as president. In the elections of May 1990 Iliescu won the presidency and his party, the Democratic National Salvation Front, obtained an overwhelming majority in the legislature.