

Judit Kinszki

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• My family history

My father, Imre Kinszki, was brought up by his paternal grandfather and his wife. Zsigmond Schiller was the chief editor of Pester-Lloyd, the most respected German language daily in Budapest at the turn of the century. My father grew up in the building where the newspaper had its offices.

It was a large apartment, and my great-grandparents had a maid and a cook. They lived well – ‘bürgerlich,’ you could say about upper-middle-class German society – but they had no fortune stashed away, only a good salary to live off.

My father’s grandfather [my father’s mother’s father] was called Zsigmond Schiller. He was born in 1847 and died in 1919. He studied law in Nyitra [today Slovakia], and continued in Vienna and Budapest, where he got his doctorate in 1872. In 1873 he started to work as a lawyer.

He worked in Budapest till 1880 and in Bratislava [today Slovakia] from 1884. He was the first to deal with the representation of minorities. Besides that, he dealt with journalism and botany essays. From 1886 he became the assistant editor of the Pester Lloyd, and was its Editor in Chief after 1906.

Soon after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 [1](#) it became the leading political newspaper in Hungary. [Editor’s note: Pester Lloyd: German language daily of Budapest from 1854 until April 1945, which had a high commercial content but also published articles related to culture.

It became the leading political daily soon after the Compromise of 1867 under the editor Miksa Falk. After Miksa Falk, Zsigmond Singer and then Jozsef Veszi were its editors. The last issue of the paper came out in April 1945.] He wrote poems and speeches in German and Hungarian. His wife, Netti Stein, was born in 1854. Her father, Salamon Stein, was the president of the Israelite Religious Community of Nyitra.



Zsigmond Schiller and Netti Stein had six children: four daughters and two sons. Jozsi, the eldest, became a journalist. Blanka's husband was Lipot Baumhorn, one of the most famous Hungarian architects of synagogues. [Baumhorn, Lipot (1860–1932): Having finished his studies of architecture in Vienna, he became a specialist in building synagogues.

His first work was the synagogue of Esztergom in 1888 and more than 20 other synagogues are linked to his name: in Ujvidek /Novi Sad/, Temesvar /Timisoara/, Szolnok, Szeged, Gyoengyoes, and several synagogues in Budapest. Other works include the women's state college and the exchange palace in Temesvar, the savings bank in Szeged, etc.]

My grandmother, Paula, might have been the next [born in 1879]. Then there was Nelli, who died in childbirth. Her daughter was raised by her grandparents. Actually, they raised three children: my father, his sister, my Aunt Kato, and Babus. Then there was Auntie Frida.

Unlike the other girls, Aunt Frida wanted to study and to work, so she became a certified teacher. She was the secretary of the mayor of Budapest. Later she left for England with her second husband. The sixth child was Otto. He was the secretary of the National Association of Textile Manufacturers, which was part of the Manufacturers' National Association. They were wealthy enough. We, i.e. my grandparents and my parents, were the poorest. All the siblings lived downtown in nice three- or four-bedroom apartments.

My great-grandmother had a long life; she died in 1938 or 1939. She lived with Jozsi, because Jozsi never married. They had a nice big apartment. They didn't follow any Jewish customs at all. We, the grandchildren, often visited them.

My great-grandparents [the interviewee's father's grandparents] were Salamon Kunzker – Kunzker became Kinszki perhaps because of a misspelling – and Mina Fried. Salamon was born in 1828 in Kemence. He married when he was 30. The Kinszkis had land near Ipolysag [today Slovakia]. They lived in a beautiful old baroque house, the kind which had a big gate with a smaller one in the middle. I remember that well, because we were there on holiday.

They didn't identify themselves as Jews and lived like the gentry: they traveled on horseback, with a buggy. When it was re-annexed to Hungary [i.e. when part of the territories of Northern Upper Hungary, which had been disannexed after the Trianon Peace Treaty became a part of Hungary again [2](#)], we spent our summers there.

The cousins were on very good terms with each other. They considered my father an orphan, so they invited us all the time, we spent the summer there. I remember that when we went there for the first time, we went to Balassagyarmat by train, and they sent a horse and buggy for us there. We enjoyed it very much.

Jozsi, one of the brothers of my grandfather Armin [Kinszki], remained there to run the farm. Great uncle Jozsi had two sons: one, Laszlo, was a farmer on the Kinszki estate; the other one, Pali, rented a count's estate at Hevmagyar, which was a small village.

There was the count's castle, a real nice castle with a chapel and everything, but that was closed, and they lived in the caretaker's house: a fancy country-house with very modern furnishings. I'd never seen an electric refrigerator and electric heater before. They had a distillery, a threshing-

machine and a steam-plough.

Pali was a very good and progressive landlord, and everybody loved him, because he cared about the schools and culture. He had a son, Jancsi. I had a crush on him as a little girl, and in my fantasies I was his wife. I had a little horse, Juci, which they raised. Jancsi was going to come to Hungary to study and he made plans to stay with us, and my brother, who was already a high school boy at that time, was to help him out. They were deported to Auschwitz from Slovakia [3](#). They all died.

I suppose that Armin, as a young man, used to go to the Academy of Commerce. I don't think he studied in Budapest, but only came here to work; he worked at the Anker Insurance Company. [Editor's note: The insurance company, which was headquartered in Vienna, had an office in Budapest.

The company was founded in the middle of the 19th century.] My grandfather was an educated man. He was also athletic. For example, he used to skate; I remember that he had a skating season ticket. Armin worked at the insurance company, and Grandmother Paula stayed at home.

They moved to a very nice three-story villa on Ilka Street, it was built by Lipot Baumhorn. I think they rented one entire story of the building. Then their two children were born, but with a huge age difference. My father, Imre, was born in 1901, and Auntie Kato, who's still living in Paris and is 94 years old, in 1907. [Editor's note: Katalin Bach passed away in 2007.]

My mother's family was completely different. I can say that they were working class, real proletarians. My grandfather and grandmother were David Grunberger [born in 1861] and Hermina Brauner [born in 1869]. They came from Upper Northern Hungary [today Slovakia], but I don't know too much about them.

My grandfather was a tailor, but later he worked for a company that made uniforms. His job was to travel to different regiments throughout the empire, measure the soldiers, and then make their elegant dress uniforms. They chose the material and the style they wanted, he took their measurements, and when he had enough orders, he traveled back to Budapest.

The clothes were made there and he delivered the finished uniforms. According to my mother, he came home only once every two or three weeks, because he was always traveling. He received fruit all the time, and once he even brought wine home, in a big barrel.

They had nine children; all of them were born in Pest. The first two children born in the country died immediately after birth, because, as my mother put it, my grandmother was still too young, and her womb was underdeveloped. Then nine more children came.

Birth control was not a concept they were familiar with. In the family they used to wonder how many children Hermina would have had if my grandfather had come home more often. The rumor in the family goes that my grandmother's brother, who was a doctor, felt pity for them and after the eleventh child he turned her womb a little, and after that they had no more children.

My mother's family lived in a very poor neighborhood, on Cserhat Street. My mother told me that in spite of this, my grandmother and grandfather used to go to the Kiraly Theater to see an operetta

or some other musical performance, and when my grandmother came home, she sang what she had heard in the theater to the children.

But, for example, things such as this happened: my mother didn't want to work out in PE class, because she was afraid that if she did a somersault, they would see her behind, and she failed the class because of this. She went home crying, and grandmother sewed her panties. She had no time to sew for her own children because she always sewed for money. She sewed for others. The children's clothes with holes in them were almost never fixed.

The oldest child was Sanyi. He graduated from some kind of academy of commerce and became a bookkeeper. He had two children. Sanyi and one of his sons were deported by the Germans in 1944. They were in a truck, driving through a forest, and his son, a 17-year-old lad, screamed for him to run away.

Sanyi didn't dare, but his son jumped off the truck, ran into the forest and later joined the partisans, so he stayed alive. We don't know anything about Sanyi. There was Fredi, who was a doctor in Zuglo. His wife's name was Eckstein. There were very rich men out there in Zuglo. Her parents had a transport company. She used to play tennis in a white skirt, and they went to the Tatra Mountains to ski in the winter, and she loved to play bridge – she was the bourgeois member of the family.

During World War I Fredi was a doctor in Isonzo [4](#), and he was shot and wounded. He was considered a war casualty because of this. Fredi received a very high decoration and was exempt from the anti-Jewish laws for a very long time, and when he also had to hide, his wife's lover hid the whole family. It was known and accepted that she had a lover.

Then there was Lajos, he was a baker. Lajos was a very proud Hungarian. He had a great twisted moustache. And he said [during the Holocaust] – I can still hear his words – 'Now I'm a stepson of my dear Motherland, but there will be a time when I'll be a full-blooded son of my dear Motherland.' He was drafted into forced labor service, disappeared and never came back.

Then there was Jenő; he was a tailor. His wife was a trader in goose meat. He also received high decorations during World War I, and for a while, far from being drafted into forced labor service, he was a member of the skeleton staff. But then he was also deported, and he disappeared and never returned. He had two children, but both of them were killed in 1944.

Then my mother Ilus came along [in 1899]. She was born exactly on Jenő's second birthday. My grandmother gave birth to all of her children at home because she had a brother, Fredi, who was a doctor, and he helped her. They swaddled my mother and put her in Jenő's lap as he was sitting on a stool, and they told him that this was his birthday present. Jenő stood up and shrugged, 'But I don't want it.'

The next one was Imre; he was a doctor, too. In World War II, he became a POW of the Russians very quickly. He said that the Russians were very kind to him. Well, they respected doctors. He came back, and became director of the district surgery here in Zuglo. He lived with us, and he was like a father to me. He got married and died very suddenly in 1953.

Then there was Erzsi, she was a clerk, she was the head of a music shop all her life. She was an educated and intelligent woman. She was deported and didn't come back. Then there was Gyongyi, one of a pair of twins, but her twin sister had died at birth. She was a lamp-shade maker.

Her husband was Zsigmond Krausz; he was also killed [in the Holocaust], but Gyongyi came back, and remarried, and died of cancer very soon after she returned. Maybe it was because they had done experiments on her in Germany because she was a twin.

The last one was Aranka. She had a profession; I think she was a glove-maker. She got married – it was a forced marriage; she felt very old, and chose to be the wife of a man called Pollak. She always said that she didn't love him. She had two children, and the relatives are still alive somewhere.

My grandparents weren't really so poor, but they had many children. Sometimes they went to Karlsbad for the curative waters there. They happened to be in Karlsbad, and my grandfather was playing a game of billiards when a newsboy rushed in and said that World War I had broken out.

They say that my grandfather fell onto the billiard table and died right then and there. The family's biggest problem was how to carry his body home, because the massive mobilization of the army had already begun. So all the members of the family pitched in together and managed to bring the body home to be buried here.

Grandma Hermina came home, and here were the nine children – four boys had been at the front, later they also became red soldiers [5](#), but they survived. My mother supported the family; she had just graduated from the commercial school. The men were all at the front, so there was a shortage of labor everywhere. My mother was very good at stenography and she worked at all kinds of places. Grandma had a sewing machine and she took on sewing at home.

My grandmother used to light candles every Friday night. I still have her candleholders, and it turned out that they were made for traveling; she must have taken them with her to Karlsbad. There was a synagogue on Bethlen Gabor Square, but you had to pay for your place there.

The boys attended Friday night services, but the girls didn't, because they couldn't pay for so many people. My grandmother went anyway. She didn't keep kosher. The family observed every holiday. My grandmother used to love reading and going to the theater. She became a big Hungarian patriot as well, and read nothing but Hungarian historical novels. She named her daughters after characters in the novels.

Her home on Bethlen Gabor Square was a kind of family nest. Everybody lived in the same apartment house. Grandmother lived in a three-room apartment with Imre and Lajos, the two bachelors. Imre used one room for his medical practice.

Sanyi and his family lived next door, and Erzsi lived in the flat above him. Aranka's flat was in the next courtyard. So only we, Gyongyi and Jenő's family, didn't live there. Everyone gathered frequently at Grandmother's. There was a huge dining table, I remember, many people sat around it. Grandmother was a uniting force in our family. She died in 1943.

My father was a quite skinny boy and they thought it better for him not to go to school. Auntie Frida [his mother's sister] taught him at home, and with her help my father passed his elementary school exams two at a time, and by the time he was nine years old he had already finished the four years of elementary school. He was a very clever young boy.

Then his father said, 'On to high-school.' The best school was that of the Piarists, so he took him there and enrolled him. Grandpa came home happily with the little Imi, whom he adored, sat down, slumped onto the table, and was dead. His death was so sudden. Until that moment, he had never had any health problems. This was in 1910.

My grandfather was so young that he didn't have a pension. I think his employers gave something to his widow for a while; then they found a job for her at that insurance company. The family couldn't keep up the house on Ilka Street, and so they went to the grandparents [Grandma Paula's parents] on Tukori Street. They lived in the building where the editorial office was, so it was kind of an official residence. Paula could never have a home of her own after that. She lived in boarding houses, and later in a small room at her friend's house. My father and aunt Kato gave her some money every month. I think that great-grandmother lived with Joska [her son] in a small apartment at that time.

My father [Imre Kinszki] went to the Piarists' school, and he graduated as a top student. There were the three of them cousins and friends, and they were thinking about writing for the periodical called *Huszadik század* [Twentieth century] and *Nyugat*, an avant-garde journal.

[Editor's note: *Huszadik század* was a periodical published from 1900 until 1919, from 1901 it was the periodical of the Social Science Society. From 1906 it was mainly the paper of the civil radicals, but before that, under the editorship of Gusztav Gratz, J. Kegl and Bodog Somlo it also gave place to liberal and socialist views.] They went to Oszkar Jaszi, and it turned out that my father had already been there and had given him his article. This was very characteristic of him.

It was Otto [the brother of the interviewee's paternal grandmother], who was always there to help. He procured my father a job at the Association of Textile Manufacturers, after he wasn't enrolled at the medical school for two consecutive years because he was Jewish [6](#).

He wanted to transfer to the teacher training faculty for biology teachers, but he wasn't allowed to, and so he became an archivist at the Association of Textile Manufacturers. It was a huge archive, which he was in charge of, but he mainly carried on correspondence in foreign languages. So it turned out that my father, who carried on correspondence effortlessly in three foreign languages, who studied philosophy and literature, could never attend university.

My mother was called Ilona Gardonyi. Her name was magyarized from Grunberger, possibly by my grandfather. My mother was born in 1899. She graduated from middle school, then a one-year commercial school, and she was a clerk, a shorthand typist.

I think my parents met so that my mother got to where my father worked, to the Manufacturers' National Association, and within that to the Association of Textile Manufacturers. She worked in the same room as my father; she worked hard, and even worked overtime and took on everything.

My father started throwing little paper airplanes onto her desk; this made her mad, and she told him off, saying, 'you stupid little kid.' But my father didn't stop. On one of the airplanes he wrote that he'd like to meet her.

They met up at the Farkasret Cemetery. This was characteristic of my father. He was a very shy young man, and when they reached the cemetery, he sat down on a bench and put his hat down next to him, so that my mother couldn't sit too close.

Then my mother sat down at the other end of the bench, and they started to talk about science. When he got home that night, my father announced that he was going to marry Ilona Gardonyi, which caused a hell of a scandal.

My father's family had assimilated several generations earlier; they lived in a completely different milieu, in a different way than my mother's family. How could an educated young man, who spoke five languages, marry such a lowly girl?

My father had been born into a family where they spoke German and English and French at home, while my mother never even learned German. For this, by the way, she often reproached her mother for whom German was almost a mother tongue, but her mother defended herself by saying that they wanted so much to adapt and be good Hungarians, that they didn't even think about teaching her German.

At my father's house, the family council gathered secretly, and decided the solution to the problem was that my mother had to be fired from her job. So Uncle Otto called her in and told her that, although they were very satisfied with her work, unfortunately there was to be a reduction in the work force.

My mother caught on right away and said, 'I would even sign a paper not to marry Imre; I have enough problems!' She was furious, because she loved this job. Of course she could establish herself in another job immediately, and she did, but my father still didn't leave her alone. My mother was not in love with him, but he kept persevering.

And her sisters badgered her continually, saying that in a Jewish family they couldn't get married unless the eldest sister was. Well, she said, then she would marry him. Then she became greatly enamored of my father. It was impossible not to love my father. He was so sweet, tender-hearted, and gentle, and he was such a modest man.

I don't think that it was an issue for my father to marry a Jewish woman, but it happened so. But they didn't even have a wedding at the synagogue. They were married in 1925. The wedding was beautiful. They rented outfits from a costume store; my father was in a morning jacket, my mother wore a wonderful myrtle wreath. They recorded it on film. One of the highlights of my childhood was watching my parents' wedding on a small film projector. I have no idea where the wedding was, but one can see on the film that they are going in an open car all the way down Rakoczi Street. A picture of them was also taken.

My mother's brothers were very nice. Two of her brothers pitched in and bought them furniture. It was very difficult to find an apartment at that time. They moved to Zuglo, because they could rent a nice two bedroom apartment for as much as a pigsty would have cost in Pest.

My mother was working in the Urania motion picture theater when they got married. She was the secretary of 'Uncle' Lakner – who owned and ran a children's theater [Artur Lakner; Uncle Lakner's Children's Theater, a company of child actors, operated from 1926 until 1943.]

At that time they used to hold literary recitals. Everybody knew my mother, because she was a good shorthand secretary; writers dictated their works to her, and she typed them at home. Even later, after she quit working full time to raise my brother and me, she typed at home.

Writers came to her to dictate, or she went somewhere to take dictation. She got her own typewriter from Mr. Lakner. We had good relations with him for a long time. They wanted my brother and me to be child actors, but my father said that he won't let his children become monkeys.

• Growing up

My brother Gabor was born in 1926 and I was born in 1934. My father didn't want him to be circumcised, but my two uncles were repulsed by that idea. My father signed a paper and got witnesses to sign it, saying that the circumcision would happen against his will.

And later, when I took a detailed look at it, I realized every signature was my father's. It was he who had signed it in many different ways. That's how frightened he was by his son's circumcision. According to my father this was a barbarian custom. He respected English traditions, he wanted to live like an English gentleman. I never heard the word Jew from my father, neither with regards to religion, nor when referring to someone, anyone.

My father worked at the Manufacturers' National Association, at the Association of Textile Manufacturers throughout, until he was fired or was superannuated because of the anti-Jewish laws [7](#). He became a textile specialist; he was the correspondent of the 'Textil Zeitung' [Textile Paper].

His salary was 500 forint [namely pengó], which we could have lived from beautifully, if he hadn't given about 200 of it to my grandmother. And when my uncle [a maternal uncle called Imre] went to Pecs to medical school, they sent him 100 every month for rent and everything.

After work my father took pictures. My mother bought him a small camera before my brother was born, he never thought of taking pictures before. Then he started taking pictures of the children, but the pictures didn't really turn out. He didn't accept it and decided to learn to develop them himself.

He set up everything on the bathroom window ledge. He invented his own camera for scientific use, which he named Kinszekta, with which he could make microscopic photos using a magnifying glass of the kind used by natural scientists.

This was in the small room, in the maid's room, we didn't have a maid. He came home sometime in the afternoon, and in the evening he went to the Central café, because he kept his literary connections. Very many people came to our place; his friends liked coming to our place very much. There was a busy social life at our place. My mother made very good cookies and she could make tasty sandwiches out of nothing.

When I came into the world [in 1934], my parents moved one floor down in order to have three rooms. The corner-room was the children's room, where I had my crib. My brother had a couch and there was a little desk and all kinds of different colored furniture.

Then there was the bedroom with two beds, two wardrobes and two night-stands. The dining-room was separate. My father's desk was there; it was a nicely carved writing-table from his youth. There was a big aquarium – my father was also crazy about fish.

He netted them himself from Rakos brook, and we had newts as well. Inside the room there was a bookcase and a suite of chairs in Biedermeier style, which they got from Auntie Frida as a wedding-present: a big round table with six chairs.

But the real life was happening in the outside courtyard. It was a three-story apartment house with one open side and the sun shone on the courtyard all day long. When we were little children, we learned to walk there, splashed there in a little pot my mother put out for us, and we did our homework there when we were older. Down in the courtyard, all the children played together. That was great fun. We were the only Jews in the house, but it was no problem.

We didn't have a servant. When I was very young there was someone who came by to help called Teri. And I also remember that there was a sewing-machine, and a lady came once a month, and patched everything up.

For example, all of my father's shirts were such that a piece was taken out of their back and new collars were made from that. Bedding and everything; she always came and did it. My grandmother Kinszki knitted and crocheted my panties and just about everything else. I had crocheted panties, socks, skating stuff, tights, pullovers, gloves, and an overcoat.

My mother went shopping and cooked every day. She used to go to the market by Bosnyak Square. But there was someone who brought milk and cottage cheese to our place. Milk and bread rolls were left in front of everybody's door every morning. My mother could bake very well.

Before we had financial problems she used to make at least five kinds of cake at the same time: there was Women's Caprice [cake with peach jam and egg foam], Pishinger [a kind of cake, hazelnut chocolate cream between wafers], Ishler, Estike, and something else as the fifth.

My brother and I bustled about and helped her. There was a big box and the cakes were put in it, and in the vestibule there were two identical white wardrobes. One was shelved, the other was a hanging wardrobe. The extra dishes were in the shelved wardrobe – we had no dining-room sideboard – and there was a coat-rack in it, and the box was always hung there, with the cakes in it. There were always cakes in it. My father loved that.

The other thing my mother was very good at was that when friends came she made wonderful cold dishes from practically nothing. There was some kind of ham, which she twisted; then tiny little green tomatoes were put up in a circle like little cannons. Then hard-boiled eggs and meat loaf were beautifully served up. There was always a lot of tea.

When my mother left her job, she got a real Rosenthal tea-set from her colleagues – it was splendid, very graceful and very beautiful, and spoons in a silver box. There was a ladle and 12

silver spoons. Every time we had guests, we took them out of the box, because we didn't use them during the week.

[Editor's note: The German Rosenthal Company, which was founded by Philip Rosenthal at the end of the 19th century, mainly manufactured porcelain goods decorated with baroque and rococo ornaments; from the 1920s they also used motifs.]

My father was a pacifist. In our apartment toy guns, bows and even toy soldiers weren't allowed. There was a small railway, animals, a zoo. My father made us toys, with animals and paleontology. He made up the rules and created the figures. He was very good at folding. We had an entire city, he could make bridges, houses, buildings, domes out of paper and he colored them for us.

I learned to play the piano. My mother decided to buy a second-hand piano in installments and a piano teacher came to teach me. Then, once it was revealed why I had to learn the piano. My uncle, who was a doctor, had a lover; a kindergarten-teacher and piano teacher.

He said he would pay my lessons if I learned to play the piano. This was the way he could give money to his lover without being too obvious. He also wanted me to go to kindergarten, but I fought against it – that would be, of course, so that he could give her money. But as for music, I played the piano until the Jewish trouble came.

My brother and I skated and swam in the ice-cold water. It was my brother's task to teach me everything. He threw me into the middle of the pool and I somehow floundered out, then he threw me in again, and that's how I slowly learned to swim. It went the same way with skating. He took me in the middle and left me there, I cried and just stood there for a while, then I toddled out somehow, he took me in again. Within an hour I skated happily. There were rough winters here; there was a skating rink at the corner of Columbus Street.

We always spent our summer in Nogradveroce. There was a family of teachers, the Szilagysis, who had a little wooden house in their garden. My parents rented it at 500 pengos for a whole season. When school was over we went down there.

A dray would come, they'd put the bedding on it in baskets, and we'd take everything down there and stay there until school started. My father was on holiday – for at least three weeks for sure – and would come down. When he wasn't on holiday, he came down every day by train. And when I was older I used to meet him every day at the station.

At Nogradveroce there were great trips up to the mountains by narrow-gauge railway. We went there many times. Even the year after I was born there is already a picture of me down there. This lasted until the very hard times of the war came.

We attended school on Angol Street and Gabor was always a top student. We simply had to do well at school. It was a shame not doing something the best we could. In our home there was always a book in front of everybody; everybody was studying or writing something. My father and my brother were great mathematicians and always put their heads together over some math problem. When I went to school, the teacher said, 'You must study as well as your brother.'

When I got to school I was a Greek Catholic already. I was five years old [in 1939] when we converted. I didn't have a Jewish identity. My brother went sprinkling at Easter, and boys also came to us. [Editor's note: Sprinkling is a national Easter custom.

This custom was thought to be an ancient fertility and cleaning ritual, this is why girls and women were sprinkled with water. It takes place on the second day of Easter: on Easter Monday. This custom is dying now.] My brother was a ministrant.

Gabor's religious studies teacher loved him and said that Gabor was a saint because he was such a good boy. We observed Christmas and Easter. It was obligatory to go to church, one had to be there at the mass every Sunday; there was a church attendance certificate, which had to be stamped.

There was a girl called Celli Toth in elementary school, and we were on good terms. Her father had a pub. When we were second or third-graders, there was some class performance and we danced Hungarian dances in Hungarian national costume. I didn't have a Hungarian national costume, because my father had already been put on the so-called B-list [8](#) and we were poor. And this dear Celli gave me her Hungarian dress to dance in it, because she was ill.

I cried so hard, because I was so embarrassed that I had to dance in Celli Toth's dress. And my brother took a picture of me. That's when the first communion came, they were [Roman] Catholic, I was Greek Catholic, ours was a week later. And then I wore Celli Toth's dress again. This was just too much for me, and they took my picture when I was crying and saying that they shouldn't take my picture because that was Celli Toth's dress.

When the anti-Jewish law came in, and I had to wear a yellow star [9](#), my best girlfriend, Irenke Papai, didn't talk to me, and didn't even look at me. But Celli Toth came up and kissed me. When we had to wear a yellow star, there was no more school. The year ended very early. I couldn't go to high school because of the anti-Jewish laws.

There was the problem that they didn't know what to do with me. There was a very kind woman who was rather poor, and she came to the house and taught my brother English. And then she started teaching me German at that time.

My dad's family was an absolutely liberal and assimilated family, with no Jewish religious activity of any kind. I never saw any candle-lighting at my dad's family, nothing. In my mom's family, however, they did some of these things. If you went there on Friday, you could see my grandmother and the boys going to synagogue.

Since my father wanted to immigrate to New Zealand, he thought that we shouldn't take this Jewishness with us, because religion didn't interest him anyway. He had a colleague, who was Greek Catholic, with whom he talked, and he really liked that their priests could marry and have children and were poor, it seemed a humane religion to him.

I remember my baptism clearly; I was very touched because I liked the priest very much; he put me on his knee and told me the Lord's Prayer. My brother Gabor became very religious. He was a very good pupil; he suffered a lot because he was discriminated against- because of the yellow star, which couldn't be taken off.

We were very badly off, my father was already on the B-list, we heated only one room, and my brother always prayed in the unheated room. My mom muttered that he was crazy, my dad said kindly, with great tolerance, 'Please leave him be, he's got to have something to escape to.'

I always followed my brother in everything. I wasn't admitted to school in 1944 when I would have started high school. My brother said that it wasn't a problem, he had his textbooks and we started learning. He taught me everything a first grader in high school had to know, just like at school.

My mother was terribly attached to her family. We went to grandmother's place almost every day. That's why it didn't hurt quite so bad once my father was conscripted into the labor brigades because we weren't at home either. My mother and I went to get my brother in front of the school.

We went to Grandma's, had some lunch there, and at dusk we walked home. My mother was thrifty, so there was never money for a tram for us; we always went on foot. On the way home we stopped at Liget city park, because there was a swing and a slide only at Liget city park. There weren't any playgrounds in Zuglo.

My mother was the only one who could talk with Grandma, she read from her lips and talked in a loud voice with her, because she was almost completely deaf at that time. I played, drew and later I mainly read. My uncle Imre, the doctor, loved me very much, he was at home until he was drafted into forced labor [10](#). He told me stories.

As a child I always fell asleep when my father was listening to Hitler. In those times Jews had to give up their radios and my brother had to give up his bike. We had a little popular wireless set and another serious, rather large one. We gave them up.

But the husband of Auntie Kato was a development engineer at Tungsram, and he made us a really special radio, which was hidden behind a wardrobe in the bedroom. My father would pull it out late in the evening and I'd hear the sounds of the BBC. He was an Anglophile and always believed that Churchill would come.

• During the war

My mother and I were in the ghetto during the war. I have never been back to the house on Akacfa Street where the ghetto was. When I walk on that corner, I stop - to enter the yard where we stayed, where they separated us; the Arrow-Cross men [11](#) were shouting that they would give us five minutes, and we heard the gunshots upstairs, because people were probably hiding there and they were shot dead on the spot. I can't go in there.

I struggled especially because of the captivity, the isolation, at first. Before the ghetto, Hilda Gobbi's father, uncle Gobbi was the commander of the house where we were taken. They liked me very much and then I always told him that I hated the curfew so much.

He made me a courier, I got an armband and there was a green cross on it and then I could take the yellow star off. He always sent me with something, which meant that I could go out when Jews weren't allowed to. Uncle Gabi told me to stand under a gate in case there was bombing. It wasn't easy, because the gates were closed.

When my father was in forced labor, we always wanted to buy him chocolate or other kinds of goodies, but they were sold out in a moment and whenever I arrived, there was none left to buy. This was also the time I was already wearing my yellow star.

But once I took it off and went to a store, and said, '10 decagrams of chocolate, please.' The salesman looked at me and said, 'Girl, aren't you a Jew?' And I was out of there like a rabbit; I left the money there and everything and ran for my life. I didn't know if he would call the Arrow Cross men in a moment or not.

My paternal grandmother [Grandmother Paula] was also in the ghetto, but somewhere else, and she died there. When we went where she was, we were told that she had died. My father was very close to his mother and he decided that we would find her. And we went to that shop, because the courtyard of the Jewish bath had filled up, and they put the bodies of the dead in this shop.

They were piled up on top of the other like logs. It was a very cold winter and almost all their clothes were taken off, clothes were worth very much. We started to move the bodies to find Grandma: he held on to their shoulders and I to their legs.

They were frozen stiff, just like logs. I wasn't horrified, because they were so hard and stiff, as if one would have piled up boards. We kept moving bodies for a long time, and then we gave up. We didn't find her, she wasn't buried either, of course.

My father was in forced labor in Deva [today Romania] and Celldomolk. Then he was here in Budapest, in some kind of mill. He was such a skinny man, but he carried heavy sacks. But even in the labor brigade, they organized a newspaper. They created a reading circle.

These people were all wearing white armbands [meaning that they were people of Jewish origin, but Christians]. In 1943 my brother was also drafted. He couldn't be a Levente [12](#), and he was appointed to the fire department. If the radio announced an air raid, my brother got on his bike immediately and went to the fire department.

I never saw my father wear a yellow star. Since he was converted he wore a white armband, but what was the difference? I can still recall my brother praying on his knees in church wearing a yellow star. I remember my mother's, and mine too; mine was made of corduroy velvet, because my mother made them out of whatever yellow material she had found in her ragbag.

The house in the ghetto had a cellar, and we were down there because they were bombing all the time [at the end of 1944]. Once the building next door was hit and the water pipe broke. Water was coming into the cellar. There was huge panic, we ran upstairs, the water came rushing in.

This was still in December. And then we were upstairs in the apartment, the windows had been boarded up everywhere. Some light came in through the cracks in the boards, it was a big room; there were about 30 of us there.

In a huge glass case there were very many books all along the wall. I didn't need anything else, I read all day long. There was a little food; the entire room got a loaf of bread to share. When my mother heard that there was silence [i.e. the bombing stopped], she immediately went out and got some bread and chocolate from the Russian soldiers.

We left the ghetto and I told my mother to go back to Liszt Ferenc Square where we had been in the Vatican protected house [13](#) and from where we went to the ghetto. Because all of our furniture, bedding, dishes had remained there. We went back and we found out that this room, where we had been in the ghetto, had been hit by a mine, and those who remained there for longer all died.

When my mother found out about this she began to regard me as an adult. She said that she would always do what I said. She asked me what party she should join. I told her to join the Social Democratic Party. Then my mother joined it. Soon after that, my mother asked me, if she shouldn't join the Communist Party.

I told her not to, because I had heard that the two parties were going to be united [14](#). She didn't join it, but she was downgraded as a member. This was very good for her, because they expected less work from her. After 1956 [15](#) she didn't join the Party again, but they used to get together with the former party comrades.

In the ghetto we didn't know anything about Auschwitz and what happened to those in forced labor service. It didn't even occur to us that my father might not be alive any more. My mother and I went to the Keleti railroad station every day, and went up to everybody who got off and asked them.

Once my mother found a man who had been in the same group, and he remembered my father. He said that their car had been unhooked and the train went on towards Germany. They got off somewhere and went on foot towards Sachsenhausen [16](#) – this was a death march [17](#).

They spent the night on a German farm, in a barn on straw, and the man [who came back] said his legs had been so full of injuries that he couldn't go on, and had decided that he would take his chances: he wormed himself into the straw. They didn't find him, and that's how he survived.

He didn't know about the others. We never found anyone else but this single man. So it's clear that somewhere between this farm and Sachsenhausen everyone had been shot. But back then we interpreted this news to mean that that he would arrive sometime soon.

We didn't have news of my brother for a long time. Then my mother found a young man who had worked with my brother. He told us that when they arrived in Buchenwald [18](#) in winter, they were driven out of the wagon, and asked what kind of qualifications they had.

My brother told them that he was a student. This young man told us that the Germans immediately tied him up, it was a December morning, and hosed him down with water just to watch him freeze to death. Those who didn't have a trade were stripped of their clothes and hosed with cold water until they froze.

I think that at that moment something broke in my mother. She was always waiting for my father, she refused to declare him dead, even though she would have been eligible for a widow's pension. But she waited for my father until the day she died. She couldn't wait for my brother, because she had to believe what she had heard. Why would that young man have said otherwise?

I adored my father. There was a kind of connection between us that I always feel, even now, that he is holding my hand. This was never the same with my mother; it was funny that she was the one

who asked advice from me in all things.

She had grown accustomed to the fact that my father managed everything. For a short time, when my uncle came back from internment in 1946, he took over the part of my father a little. He got married but he still took care of us, financially, too. And when he died [in 1953] it nearly killed me. I couldn't eat because I had lost him as well. He was a smart, intelligent man who you could talk to, and it felt good. It really got to me very much.

• After the war

We lived on Liszt Ferenc Square. We carried there what remained from Zuglo [the previous apartment]. We pulled the furniture there in a handcart by ourselves not long after the liberation. There were three rooms in that apartment and a different family lived in each room – but the real owner never came back.

Then a family from one of the rooms went back to their own house, and we had two rooms to live in. Then my mother got an apartment on the ground floor for the other family, so the whole apartment became ours. My mother lived there on Liszt Ferenc Square until she died [in 1983].

In 1946 my uncle came back from the Russian POW camp, and he needed two rooms: one for himself, and one for his surgery. When Gyongyi came back she lived there as well. Then my father's sister, Auntie Kato, returned; she lived with us, too. Everybody else was dead or had emigrated, so we existed in a kind of vacuum.

My mother held on to her brother and sister and that single auntie as tight as she possibly could. My mother did all kinds of things. She cleaned the entire house, washed bodies, she took on everything. Later my uncle got married, Gyongyi got married, too, and we two remained alone in that house.

One room was always rented to the IBUSZ, the tourist agency, to make a little extra money. After the war my mother became a stenographer and correspondent at the Fashion Wholesale Agency, then at the National Bank and at the Toker [company trading in fuel].

It was April 1945, when all of a sudden my mother looked at me and said, 'Aren't you supposed to be in school?' The nearest school was the Maria Theresa Grammar School for Girls. Many of my grandmother's sisters had attended it. This was a prestigious school in Pest, on Andrássy Avenue. We went in, they took a look at us, we looked terrible, and they said immediately that school had already started, and that there would be no more admissions.

Well, my mother opened her mouth and said, 'All right, this is how we look, ghetto and all, but this is her father!' And she took out my father's school reports from the Piarists. They admitted me. They said that I could only be a private pupil, but I could attend classes, and I had to take a private examination. From that moment I went there regularly. I had perhaps two B+ grades and the rest were all top marks, in the first year. After that I had only top marks.

It wasn't easy, as Andrássy Street was a very fancy neighborhood, and most of the girls were pretty wealthy. I was not in that group; I couldn't be in with them. But I knew all the things these ladies didn't. I knew how to cook at an early age, because my mother had taught me everything

because she had to. They hated me very much at school, but I took that in my stride.

I didn't belong anywhere. There was a Jewish scout troop, but I couldn't join that because I was Greek Catholic. Religion class was obligatory after 1945, but since I was the only Greek Catholic at school I had to go to religion class at the priest's apartment, who was also my brother's priest.

I was also interested in religion history and liturgy, and how the East-West Schism happened. I kept going there until one day I asked him why he didn't save my brother. I knew that the priest was from the country, I told him that he could have taken him to his village and said that he was his nephew from Transylvania [19](#).

Nobody would have doubted the word of a priest. And he told me it was because God needed martyrs. I told him he was an ugly hypocrite and asked why he didn't just admit it and say that he was a coward. I would have accepted that.

The year of the Communist takeover came, it wasn't obligatory anymore, so I never went to religion class again. Still, I went to church with my mother. There was a very kind lady, the sacristan lady. We were so lonely; everybody around us had disappeared, our home, our belongings, brothers and sisters, and grandparents.

My mother was looking for something to hold on to and this lady from Szentendre, whose house we used to pass after church, and when we went in she offered us all kinds of things. At Easter we got a little sliced bacon and cookies. She was like a member of the family to us. We had no place to go on Sundays any more- we had formerly visited grandmother's house, but everybody had disappeared - and so then we went to this lady's house. We loved her family very much.

When I was 14 years old I was able to choose between science and the humanities. My mother left everything up to me. She was even embarrassed of her handwriting, and she always told me if something had to be signed: 'Sign it, Juditkam, you know my handwriting a lot better.'

I chose the humanities, but this only lasted a year, then the nationalization [20](#) of schools was introduced, and every class was the same. Many children fled the country, disappeared. It was a strange, fearful atmosphere and we didn't dare to ask. In the fourth grade there were sixty of us and only sixteen of us graduated. This was the last eighth grade high school class.

The Hungarian Youth League, the MINSZ, and the Student's Association within that were formed. [Editor's note: MINSZ was established in 1948 as a pool uniting the youth organizations. Its task was to increase the influence of the MDP within the youth and to aid production. It ceased in 1950 when the DISZ was formed.]

I immediately joined it and became a member of the governing body of the school. We founded school self-government. We used to have a uniform; gray blouse, belt, belt buckle with the Kossuth-arms; a torch, no red star, it wasn't communist at all, and a dark blue tie.

Five or six children in our class and I wore those clothes. We were children of intellectuals, but poor; most of the other children's fathers had also died. Three of us, the class council, were allowed to go attend meetings and we had a say in the grades.

We did very ugly, dictatorial things, we downgraded our classmates: those we didn't like got a bad mark. I was an official in charge of educational affairs until the end, and later at a district level. Thanks to my bumptiousness, I was attending seminars when I was 14-15 years old.

In 1948 we were involved in village propaganda. [Editor's note: This was a form of agitation in the country used by the Hungarian Workers' Party; the leadership of the party organized the village propaganda in 1946, because at the 1945 elections it became obvious that even the farmers who had just been given land voted against the Communist Party.]

The aim was to establish local party organizations or to strengthen them, and to dissolve the anticommunist atmosphere and prejudice. Workers from big cities and university students took part in village propaganda. The movement ceased to exist around 1953.]

I found out after the event that the ultimate object was a village called Olaszliszka, where they resisted the nationalization of schools. We arrived at that village and performed there. We were sent out to houses so that we could sleep there, eat there, and we had to persuade people to vote for the popular front. I found out later that people in the village had been tortured; they had taken many men away and done horrible things.

You can't imagine what the atmosphere was like there at that time. We sat at a table, and I could say anything, but these people didn't dare say a word. They thought that by not saying anything they would avoid trouble. We didn't know that. In fact, we were only tools of politics. We thought that it was still the popular front; in fact the leaders had been with the Communists for a long time.

The party headquarters were on Jokai Square. I liked to go there because they liked me. Since I was a young child, I had liked to recite. And this was such a small community. There were probably lots of Jews who were trying to find their place in this new society. There were always little meetings, everybody brought cakes and sandwiches; there was tea and a performance. There were two performers. I recited, and there was this boy who danced.

After the war, nobody who survived thought about leaving. The aim of my mother's whole family was to assimilate as much as possible. I never saw payot and tallit in any home I knew; my mother never thought of lighting candles and didn't pay attention to Fridays.

My brother, when he was a Greek Catholic, kept fast on Friday, so we couldn't cook meat. And before mass, eating and drinking, even water, was not allowed. He would have killed me if he'd found out that I drank even a sip of water because he took it very seriously.

I was as religious as my brother once. Until the priest said what he did about my brother ... In that moment, my relations with religion were cut off. And I had our youth movement. The movement lasted a long time, until I was a student. But I never joined the Communist Party.

If there had been a Social Democratic Party, maybe I would have joined that. They asked me to join the Communist Party many times, but I explained every time that strict discipline inside the Party was not for me. I felt the need to state my own opinion. And besides I refused to be in the same party as those Arrow Cross men.

Our principal, after the school was nationalized, was a true Bolshevik. She said to me, 'You will go to Lenin University.' I said I wasn't going there, and that I wanted to become an art historian. She said, she would guarantee me the Rakosi scholarship. In those days, when my mother's salary was 500 forints, that would mean 2,000 forints a month. Obstinate, I still said 'No!'

Instead, I went and took an entrance examination for art history. The head of the admission committee saw that I was intelligent, he could ask anything: special literature, the latest things, I knew everything. Then he said that an art historian had to know languages.

I said, 'Latin, German, English, French, Russian; would five languages be enough?' He gave me texts in all these languages to translate. I suppose that the Latin was the best, because he said he would admit me to the Latin faculty. I said that I wouldn't go there.

I received a paper saying that I had been admitted to the English faculty. Then I met a very intelligent man who said I'd better go to the English faculty, and so I came off well with that. In art history in Hungary, everybody's territory is so divided among historians that at most I could have become a clerk in a pawnshop. Whereas, if I graduated in English, the world would be my oyster; I'd have opportunities in any field. I could later become an art historian. I listened to that advice.

The English faculty consisted of a big hall, which was a library, and another room. Classes were held in the library. The English faculty was made up of four teachers, and there were eight or nine students. The first class came, we talked, and it came to light that none of us wanted to choose English as a major.

They were students of history, of religion and everything. It was doubtful whether the English course would start, so you couldn't be a candidate. This was the first year that nobody took their final exam in high school in English.

Our first class was in English. The teacher came in and started to talk in English. And we just looked at him. And he said, 'Why don't you write it down?' I was the only one who knew English well enough to reply, 'Because we don't speak English, sir.'

'Ah,' he said, 'This is not where I should be then,' and he went out. I ran after him, and said, 'No, sir, we are the English group. As a matter of fact I wanted to become this, the other ones wanted to become that, and so on and so forth.' He said he didn't care, we had to learn to speak English.

There were a few stupid girls who immediately went to the registrar's office and told them that they were of working class origin, and told them what had happened. And they called this Hervei and forced him to teach in Hungarian for one semester. Thereupon all hell broke loose. He treated us like animals. Six of us remained until the end of the first semester. Then suddenly they told us we had become the Hungarian faculty.

I received social assistance then, because I was a top student. It was a scholarship. My scholarship was approximately the same as my mother's salary; for example we only had to pay 25 percent of the price of the textbooks, and the students' canteen was cheaper for us.

I even went there on Sunday with a pot and took some food home, where it served as lunch and dinner for my mother and me. Every summer I went to where my mother worked. I had to make

some money because there was no scholarship in the summer. There were never any proper holidays.

My mother and I were great tourists though, so we stayed in cheap hostels [where several people shared a room with strangers]. But we also went to the opera, and to concerts; to the cheapest places, but at least we went. We also bought books; my mother always put great emphasis on that.

My husband and I attended the same university. We are of the same age; he was born in 1934 as well. His name is Cs. It was Schilling before. It was a German [Swabian] family from Celldomolk. His father was in the Arrow Cross Party [21](#), then he became a Communist Party member, that's how it is.

Cs. went to the Benedictine school in Koszeg for four years, and when the school was nationalized he attended high school in Celldomolk for four years. He was a clever boy, and they sent him to the Lenin Institute. He went there for a year but hated it very much.

He had an uncle, and when he complained a lot at home, his mother went to him for help. It only took a phone call to arrange to get Cs. into the Faculty of Arts. He attended the Faculty of Arts, beginning in the second year. He was a student of Hungarian.

Then summer came and they told me that I could work at the KISZ [22](#) Center because they were organizing a leadership KISZ camp, and I got a scholarship. My duty was to write the letter of invitation for the chosen people, and to mail them. Among others, Cs. S. was there, but I didn't know him. This began on 20th August, and there was a big ball at the Faculty of Economics. I danced all night with a professor's assistant, Pali Buch.

There was a social evening a day later, and I went to talk to Professor Laszlo Boka, whom my father had known well, and some boy, my future husband, came over. [Boka, Laszlo (1910–1964): researcher of 20th century Hungarian literature, writer, critic.

He was an under-secretary in the Ministry of Education (1947–1950), then a university professor at ELTE. He had poetry books published.] Later there was dancing, and some Neanderthal guy asked me for a dance. I told Cs. to just cut in if this guy asked me for a dance, and he did. His first sentence, I can never forget it, was: 'Pali Buch is a Jew, isn't he?' I replied that I didn't know, but that I was a Jew.

This was the first sentence. It was because I had decided immediately after the war that if somebody asked, I would tell him, as I wouldn't want some Arrow Cross man for a husband. I wouldn't boast of it, but I would say it. I was almost ashamed for this whole Jewish stuff.

This is the shame felt by victims; it is terrible. I don't deny it, but I would rather have said I was a Greek Catholic – when it was necessary – and when it was no longer necessary, I was a MINSZ [Hungarian Youth League] member.

Cs. didn't say a word. He revolted against the reality of Celldomolk. Maybe not against Hungarian Nazism, but against that philistine way of life. In his home they didn't have a single book. They had the archetypal short prayer on the wall, and that family bed with big pillows. Later he always told me that we would have a car and would get our clothes from Vaci Street, and then we would go

and show ourselves off in Celldomolk.

Cs. was very perseverant, he always came around, and we walked and talked. When that camp was over, I was nuts about him. The course started, and he just came and came. He and my mother couldn't really stand each other from the first moment. He was a dormitory boy, so he always came to our place.

My mother kept her eye on us – we would sit near the stove talking, and mother didn't leave too often. Once my mother said to Cs., 'If you love her so much, why don't you ask for her hand in marriage?' Cs. said that he would.

Cs. was a teacher for a few months, then he was employed by the Magveto publishing house. He was called up to the army in 1956 and transferred to the provinces, and they wanted to put me in another country town. We quickly went to Professor Boka, and he arranged for me to be transferred to Szerencs, the same place as Cs.

I went there and went to the educational secretariat. 'Oh, we are waiting for you, the oath must be taken and the army will be taken into account for Cs.' He said, 'There is a Hungarian professorial chair in Szerencs for Cs., and we see that you, comrade, have learned Russian as well. On the outskirts of Szerencs, in Bekecs, there is a Russian professorial chair, and you can teach German at the Szerencs high school. Out there, he said, there is an apartment for teachers, you can move there.'

I went to see the apartment and presented myself to the headmaster. He said, 'Are you joking? What do you mean you will be nominated for the post? So-and-so's daughter from Bekecs is graduating next year from the Russian faculty, and the post belongs to her. But all right, you can take it until then.' 'And what about the apartment?' I asked. 'Well, a pensioned teacher is living there, and we can't throw her out, as she comes from this village.'

Thereupon I went to Budapest and wrote them a letter saying that because they didn't keep their promises – there was no professorial apartment, the meals and transport had not been arranged – I wouldn't take the job. And I wrote this to Cs. as well. I got a reproachful letter back from Cs. in which he wrote, 'After I get discharged, where shall I go? They have put me out of the dormitory and I have no job.'

Auntie Kato, who worked at the publishing company, said that she had just heard that they would start English courses for bookshop workers and that they were looking for English teachers; she would get me in. They explained to me that what I had to do was to go to an employment agency, and they could set me up.

I found out that the English course was still under preparation, and until then, I had to go to a library where there were foreign books. This was the university bookshop. I was the youngest and had the highest qualifications, but I was a gofer there, and they made me do all kind of crappy jobs.

Cs. came home in the meantime and he immediately went to the fighting on Szena Square. I went everywhere, too; I was at the building of the Hungarian Radio, at the parliament, and everywhere. I felt that it was my revolution, I had to be there. On 3rd October [actually on 3rd November] it

looked like peace and quiet, and the troops had surrendered.

What was it that woke us up the morning after? The roar of cannons. They announced on the radio that our troops were fighting. My mother knew that it was better for a man not to go out in the streets, because he would either be caught up in the fighting or be taken by the Russians. My mother went out and queued for bread. She didn't let us out in the street at all.

When things calmed down we went out to see what had happened. Then Cs. said he was going home to Celldomok to see what had happened there. That's when the defections started, and I thought I wouldn't see him again. He had two aunts in the US, who had fled the country in 1945. A month passed, and I heard nothing about him.

Suddenly he came back, saying that he couldn't flee because of me. And I told him, 'Look, I don't want to go; my mother is here, and she doesn't want to go either, but you just go ahead.' But 'No,' he said, 'We could only go together.'

They let him stay in the dormitory for a while, but after a while he had to leave. He had no job or anything. Professor Boka helped him – at the Academy of Sciences they had just started to put together an encyclopedia, and entries were being compiled. This was half a job, but they paid for it.

We also needed an apartment. Professor Boka spoke to his mother-in-law, who had a big house on University Square; there was a furnished room for rent in the apartment opposite them. They acted as guarantors, and Cs. got the room. But it was specified that women couldn't set foot in it. So then what?

We were walking on Engels Square, where the 5th district town hall is, and Cs. said, 'Let's get married, that would be the best; they can't say that a wife cannot enter there.' I said all right. He said, 'Let's go and ask when it would be possible.' They told us it was Friday. So we had ourselves registered in advance for Friday.

At the registrar, Cs.'s witness was Professor Boka; mine was an ethnographer from our house. It was just them, us, my mother, and nobody else. After that Boka – he had an official car from the Academy – took us up to the castle quarter to celebrate. In the Tarnok confectionery, he called for two fancy Dobos cakes and a brandy for us. The wedding was at 11 o'clock in the morning, and Cs. had to go to work at 12 o'clock. Boka arranged a job for him in the dormitory of a foster home at Sashegy; he was the resident assistant master.

The furnishings in our room were as follows: There was a wire-mesh on four legs, with a mattress on top. Cs. had a duvet, a pillow; later I got pillowcases from my mother. When I got pregnant my mother wanted us to move to her place. Cs. said he would move there if the apartment was separated off. My mother said she couldn't do this alone, that somebody had to be there, because she couldn't work with so many craftsmen. Cs. didn't want to hear about that.

The tenant was consumptive and we were scared that our child would get infected. The apartment was full of bed bugs. We protected ourselves against them in vain, as they were everywhere. Cs. was very depressed about this; he was editing Ortutay's [ethnography] book at the time. [Ortutay, Gyula (1910–1978): ethnographer, university professor (ELTE), he also held several political functions.]

Cs told him about his desperate state of affairs. Ortutay said, 'Oh, I'll help you. The president of the 8th district council is asking me for an examination postponement. I'll tell him I won't give a postponement unless he gives you an apartment.'

Then we got some temporary accommodation. It was a loft facing the yard. You can't imagine the happiness we felt at getting an apartment of our own. We didn't have a kitchen, only a bathroom and toilet. The place had one window, which the child got; a curtain separated her room. The caretaker was very skilled, he shelved in the whole entrance-hall, as we already had lots of books then; Cs. worked at a publishing house and got copies from there, and he got them from the writers as well.

There was a tile stove, but it had always gone cold by the morning, and the toilet was horribly cold. It leaked all the time; the child had a chronic ear infection because the apartment was wet and moldy. So life wasn't easy, but it was our own apartment. We lived there until 1970.

Cs. was very busy and he only came home at night. When he got home, the child was always sleeping; I don't really know if she knew she had a father. I raised her completely on my own. When we moved to the temporary accommodation, Cs. worked at home, but the child disturbed him. So I took her away all the time. We visited all the museums of Budapest.

Eszter, my daughter, knew everything about the family, and about the war, but I didn't raise her as a Jew at all. In fact, she is baptized, because my mother-in-law's family demanded it. Cs. is not religious; he hates priests. But my mother-in-law said the following, and what could I say? 'If this regime occurs again, wouldn't you take it to heart if something bad happened to the child because of that?'

After the child was born I started to give English lessons while walking the baby. I pushed her in her pram, and two children came with me and I taught them English as we walked. I didn't want to send her to a day nursery. I took her to my mother's and I gave English lessons there. The child stood in the baby-walker, she played.

Then I thought that she should go to kindergarten so that I could try to get a job. It was not easy. I wrote a petition that I would take on anything, pioneer-leading, nursery school, anything. I wrote where I had been until then, what I had done, where I had graduated, and I lodged this with all school districts. Nothing.

Then I got a phone call, saying that a substitute was needed in the 8th district. I went there, and taught Hungarian and history for half a year. My mother took care of the child during that time. Then I went wherever I had to for a week, or two. I taught everywhere in the 8th district.

These were very rough schools. The teachers drank, didn't teach, and some came in and beat the children. They were appalling places. All those poor Gypsy [Roma] boys, whose parents were in prison; it was clear that they were always maltreated, but they felt that I treated them humanely.

My daughter came up with the idea that she wanted to learn Spanish, a language that nobody knew. She went to Szinyei High School and arranged to be admitted. She was amongst the excellent students at that school. She was very good at Hungarian, History, and excellent at Spanish.

Her teachers said that because only two people were admitted to the Spanish course, children of diplomats, it was not worth trying. It would be better for her to go to the Hungarian-Pedagogy faculty. She was a top student until the end.

After the first year, in a camp, she met her husband. Peter, who is a mathematician, was in the fourth year at that time. He is not Jewish. Eszter was 20 years old when they got married. There was nobody else at the wedding but the two witnesses.

They moved into my mother's place, they got their own room, and they did their place up nicely. Pannika, my granddaughter was born there in 1980. Eszter didn't take off a year from the faculty. When she took her exams, her grandmother took care of the child. In 1985 they divorced. Eszter didn't get married again. When they divorced she went to live with another man, and he wasn't Jewish either.

After 35 years of marriage I also got divorced. Cs. was a party member, and was on good terms with Aczel [Gyorgy Aczel (1917–1991): politician, member of the Political Committee, then of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party].

From the mid-1960s until 1985 he was the main leader of Hungarian cultural life.] and Pozsgay [Imre Pozsgay (b. 1933): politician, head of the Press Department of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, cultural minister from 1976 until 1982, member of the Central Committee of the party, chief secretary of the Patriot People's Front].

They always asked his advice on literature and fine arts. But we were in the dissident movement, we knew everybody, we had all their publications. We were the ones who introduced subversive literature. Cs. always thought that our calls were being intercepted. When we were talking on the phone he would always say, 'All right, I'm telling this to the listening apparatus.'

I have two cousins; one lives in Paris, the other one in London; we were on very good terms. When we were in England we visited them, and they used to come to visit us, but after a time they stopped coming. I asked another cousin of mine why they never came, and he said, 'To tell you the truth, the rumor about Cs. is that he's an undercover man.' So Cs. said, 'Your biboldo relatives!' [Biboldo is a pejorative word for Jews].

At that moment I felt that I had lived with a stranger for 35 years. How could he say such a thing? I thought he was an intelligent, educated, liberal, tenderhearted gentleman! Who was this man with whom I lived? A drunken, foul-mouthed, fascist coachman? I was shocked and devastated, but I thought it would be best, if I didn't say a word.

Two weeks passed, and I didn't speak to him. I put his coffee and his meals in front of him, I washed the dishes, and everything, but I didn't say a word. He didn't notice anything. I thought that maybe he would think better of it. He said nothing. Then I moved away. At first I lived at my daughter's place, then she found a separate apartment.

I have lived alone since then. I never saw my husband again after the divorce. My daughter and my grandchild kept in touch with him, and they told me that he had died [in 1997]. The woman he lived with during his last days got all the serious valuables and all the little objects of our common life.

I still don't know anything about the Jewish religion. My mother couldn't read Hebrew either, I only heard the prayers sometimes, but I don't really know them. I have only been at a synagogue for a concert. It never entered my mind to go to the synagogue, but if I got a complimentary ticket, I went.

When we were in Prague I went to the old synagogue, but as in a museum visit. We didn't really use Jewish expressions at home. Babits was god in our home, the first poem by him I learned was the poem 'Home is sweet.' [Babits, Mihály (1883 – 1941) was a Hungarian poet, writer and translator.] And the first music I heard was folk songs adapted by Bela Bartok: my father liked these.

So I only heard Jewish tunes when I was already an adult. I don't think my father had any concrete belief in God. And I feel this in myself, too, I can marvel at a pebble, a flower. I believe for example that someone lives until someone else thinks of her with love, so until I don't consider her dead.

There are some dishes, which I think my mother made in quite a traditional way. I think our household was somewhat kosher. My mother really paid attention to some things, even after the war, namely to what could be or couldn't be cooked together or in the same pan. There was a bean stew which I hated; there were nice big beans and cinnamon in it.

I hated it so much because it would have been so good with onion and garlic, but no, it was sweet. And when my husband once bought me a Jewish cookbook he asked, 'Why did I marry into an international company?' Chulent, he loved these dishes, and he bought a Jewish cookbook, I learned a lot from that.

In my childhood I only had negative experiences related to Jewry. In Zuglo there aren't many Jews. If I think about it, I didn't have any classmates whom I think of as such, it wasn't obvious.

I would classify myself as a Hungarian Jew. My Judaism is in the classical tradition of liberal Budapest assimilated Jewry. That is, if somebody doesn't have any money, they should still have books, and I grew up in a home where everybody studied all the time. Erudition, music and music-reading; tolerance, interest towards people.

I am preparing five students for drama school. It never occurs to me that there might be a Jew among them. I am happy that I am Jewish; I even appreciate everything I went through, except the fact that my father and brother were killed. But I don't mind that I was in the ghetto. I am just more sensitive to other people's suffering, not only the Jews' but everybody's.

I definitely consider myself Hungarian. My students asked me many times why I remained here in 1956. I told them that even though it might be strange, the language and the literature kept me here. I couldn't live in a country where those lines of poetry, those words don't mean anything to anyone. I will never learn another language so well that it would mean the same.

I have been to Israel with my daughter and my grandchild; she really wanted to go there. We have also been in a kibbutz, and when Panni saw that the children were pushed around in small baby-walkers, and there were redheads, white and black among them, she said that she wanted to go there and do that. Eszter and I are quite solitary. I felt that I probably couldn't live in such a kibbutz.

At the census last year in February I didn't tell them that my religion would be Jewish. I don't want anybody to ask me such a thing! Because I want to live in a country where I shouldn't have to confess this in public. Why should I? I consider part of democracy to mean that it's up to me whether I want to answer to that question or not. Since I don't pay taxes, I don't frequent the synagogue either.

So what makes me a Jew? That the anti-Jewish laws consider me one? Then I accept that. But there's something more, something sentimental, spiritual. I hate to confess this publicly, and in my opinion many others feel the same way. So I said, 'Nothing.'

I am not Greek Catholic since that incident [with the religion teacher]; after that we still attended religion classes, but we didn't go to church anymore. I have very pleasant experiences from there. I liked being in that small church, I liked its cozy atmosphere, the nice ancient tunes, its Byzantine atmosphere.

I often think that if I had to define myself, I would surely leave out Greek Catholic, only sympathy would remain. The Greek Catholic religion is much more sympathetic than the [Roman] Catholic one.

The era of dualism was the time of complete assimilation. Who would have called Ignac Goldziher [Ignac Goldziher (1850–1921): the founder of modern Islam research, one of the most significant researchers of the Muslim religion, law history and history of philosophy, folklore and Arab linguistic] or Aurel Stein [Aurel Stein (1862–1943): archeologist, orientalist, member of the Hungarian Scientific Academy, headmaster of the Oriental College in Lahore.] or I don't know who a Jew? These were the greatest, and my great-grandfather, too, who first dealt with the issues of the minorities on a scientific level, as a jurist. Or Bodog Schiller, my nephew, who was an archeologist and graduated with a gold ring.

• Glossary:

1 Compromise (Ausgleich) of 1867: It was a constitutional compromise between Hungarian aspirations for independence and Emperor Francis Joseph's desire for a strong, centralized empire. It divided the Habsburg Empire into two states (Austria and Hungary, both comprising various nationalities).

The Hungarians gained control of their internal affairs in return for agreeing to a centralized foreign policy and the continued union of the Austrian and Hungarian crowns personified in the Habsburg ruler.

A common cabinet dealt with foreign relations, defense and finances. The Emperor acted as the commander in chief of the imperial and royal (K.u.K.) army. The commercial and monetary policies as well as tariffs were 'common' concerns to be negotiated every ten years.

Otherwise, both countries elected independent parliaments to deliberate internal affairs and had independent ministries. The frames of a modern liberal civil state and institutions of equal rights were established, registered marriage and religious tolerance were embodied and the 100-year process of Jewish emancipation was also completed during this period, i.e. 1867-1918 (called the

dualistic era in Hungarian history).

2 First Vienna Dictate: On 2nd November 1938 a German-Italian international committee in Vienna obliged Czechoslovakia to surrender much of the southern Slovakian territories that were inhabited mainly by Hungarians.

The cities of Kassa (Kosice), Komarom (Komarno), Ersekujvar (Nove Zamky), Ungvar (Uzhorod) and Munkacs (Mukacevo), all in all 11.927 km² of land, and a population of 1.6 million people became part of Hungary. According to the Hungarian census in 1941 84% of the people in the annexed lands were Hungarian-speaking.

3 Deportations from Slovakia: According to the census of 1930, there were 136,737 Jews in Slovakia, which was among the first Nazi satellites to deport the Jews to death camps. In the first wave of deportations (from March to October 1942) 57 trains, each with about 1,000 people departed, of which 19 left directly for Auschwitz and 38 for the Lublin area.

In the second wave of 1944-1945, 7,936 people were deported to Auschwitz, 2,732 to Sachsenhausen, and 1,638 to Terezin. The number of Jews surviving the Holocaust or returning from abroad to Slovakia was about 28,000 after the war, in June 1946.

4 Battles in Isonzo: Between June 1915 and November 1917, 12 battles were fought along the Isonzo River (Austrian-Italian border, today Slovenia). This territory was one of the strongest parts of the Austrian-Hungarian front line, especially because of its geographical location. There were very many casualties on both sides.

5 Hungarian Soviet Republic: The Hungarian Soviet Republic was the political regime in Hungary from 21st March 1919 until the beginning of August of the same year. It was also the second Soviet government in history, the first one being the one in Russia in 1917.

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

Almost 600 executions were ordered by revolutionary tribunals and the government also resorted to violence to expropriate grain from peasants. Only the Red Guard, commonly referred to as "Lenin-boys," was organized to support the power by means of terror.

The Republic eliminated old institutions and the administration, but due to the lack of resources the new structure prevailed only on paper. Mounting external pressure, along with growing discontent and resistance of the people, resulted in a loss of communist power. Budapest was occupied by the Romanian army on 6th August, putting an end to the Hungarian Soviet Republic.

6 Numerus clausus in Hungary: The general meaning of the term is restriction of admission to secondary school or university for economic and/or political reasons. The Numerus Clausus Act passed in Hungary in 1920 was the first anti-Jewish Law in Europe.

It regulated the admission of students to higher educational institutions by stating that aside from the applicants' national loyalty and moral reliability, their origin had to be taken into account as well. The number of students of the various ethnic and national minorities had to correspond to

their proportion in the population of Hungary. After the introduction of this act the number of students of Jewish origin at Hungarian universities declined dramatically.

7 Anti-Jewish laws in Hungary: The first of these anti-Jewish laws was passed in 1938, restricting the number of Jews in liberal professions, administration, and in commercial and industrial enterprises to 20 percent. The second anti-Jewish Law, passed in 1939, defined the term "Jew" on racial grounds, and came to include some 100,000 Christians (apostates or their children).

It also reduced the number of Jews in economic activity, fixing it at six percent. Jews were not allowed to be editors, chief-editors, theater directors, artistic leaders or stage directors. The Numerus Clausus was introduced again, prohibiting Jews from public jobs and restricting their political rights. As a result of these laws, 250,000 Hungarian Jews were locked out of their sources of livelihood.

The third anti-Jewish Law, passed in 1941, defined the term "Jew" on more radical racial principles. Based on the Nuremberg laws, it prohibited inter-racial marriage. In 1941, the anti-Jewish Laws were extended to North-Transylvania. A year later, the Israelite religion was deleted from the official religions subsidized by the state.

After the German occupation in 1944, a series of decrees was passed: all Jews were required to relinquish any telephone or radio in their possession to the authorities; all Jews were required to wear a yellow star; and non-Jews could not be employed in Jewish households. From April 1944 Jewish property was confiscated, Jews were barred from all intellectual jobs and employment by any financial institutions, and Jewish shops were closed down.

8 B-list, B-listing: Reduction of the number of government employees, dismissal of certain civil servants. The first B-listing was carried out mainly as a form of crisis management, based on plans by the Minister of Finance, Tibor Kallay, in 1922. Those who took part in the revolutions were dismissed first. The second wave of B-listing took place after WW II.

At least 94,000 people were dismissed (10 times more than after WW I), mainly for political reasons. The HCP (Hungarian Communist Party) wanted to get rid off the 'difficult' employees, thus gaining control over government administration.

9 Yellow star in Hungary: In a decree introduced on 31st March 1944 the Sztojay government obliged all persons older than 6 years qualified as Jews, according to the relevant laws, to wear, starting from 5th April, "outside the house" a 10x10 cm, canary yellow colored star made of textile, silk or velvet, sewed onto the left side of their clothes.

The government of Dome Sztojay, appointed due to the German invasion, emitted dozens of decrees aiming at the separation, isolation and despoilment of the Jewish population, all this preparing and facilitating deportation. These decrees prohibited persons qualified as Jews from owning and using telephones, radios, cars, and from changing domicile.

They prohibited the employment of non-Jewish persons in households qualified as Jewish, ordered the dismissal of public employees qualified as Jews, and introduced many other restrictions and prohibitions. The obligation to wear a yellow star aimed at the visible distinction of persons qualified as Jews, and made possible from the beginning abuses by the police and gendarmes.

A few categories were exempted from this obligation: WWI invalids and awarded veterans, respectively following the pressure of the Christian Church priests, the widows and orphans of awarded WWI heroes, WWII orphans and widows, converted Jews married to a Christian and foreigners. (Randolph L. Braham: A nepirtas politikaja, A holokauszt Magyarországon / The Politics of Genocide, The Holocaust in Hungary, Budapest, Uj Mandatum, 2003, p. 89-90.)

10 Forced labor [Labor/Working Battalion]: Under the 1939 II. Law 230, those deemed unfit for military service were required to complete "public interest work service". After the implementation of the second anti-Jewish Law within the military, the military arranged "special work battalions" for those Jews, who were not called up for armed service.

With the entry into northern Transylvania (August 1940), those of Jewish origin who had begun, and were now finishing, their military service were directed to the work battalions. A decree in 1941 unified the arrangement, saying that the Jews were to fulfill military obligations in the support units of the National Guard.

In the summer of 1942, thousands of Jews were recruited to labor battalions with the Hungarian troops going to the Soviet front. Some 50,000 in labor battalions went with the Second Hungarian Army to the Eastern Front - of these, only 6-7,000 returned.

11 Arrow Cross men: Extreme right-wing Hungarian group organized according to the Nazi model. Their symbol became a "Hungarianized" swastika (Teutonic cross), the Arrow Cross. With strong political rivalry between extreme right-wing groups in Hungary, they did not constitute a uniform organization.

From the beginning of the 1930s the trend lead by Ferenc Szalasi rose above the others and formed the Party of the Nation's Will in 1935. Two years later Szalasi was arrested and Kalman Hubay took over the lead. In 1938 he established an organization permitted by the government under the name of Hungarian National-Socialist Party - Hungarist Movement, which later became an important, if not determinative, power in the Hungarian political arena.

12 Levente movement: Para-military youth organization in Hungary from 1928-1944, established with the aim of facilitating religious and national education as well as physical training. Boys between the age of 12 and 21 were eligible if they did not attend a school providing regular physical training, or did not join the army.

Since the Treaty of Versailles forbade Hungary to enforce the general obligations related to national defense, the Levente movement aimed at its substitution as well, as its members not only participated in sports activities and marches during weekends, but also practiced the use of weapons, under the guidance of demobilized officers on actual service or reserve officers.

(The Law no. II of 1939 on National Defense made compulsory the national defense education and the joining of the movement.) (Source: Ignac Romsics: Magyarország története a XX. században/The History of Hungary in the 20th Century, Budapest, Osiris Publishing House, 2002, p. 181-182.)

13 Schutzpass (free-pass): Document emitted by the diplomatic missions of neutral countries, which guaranteed its owner the protection of the given country. Theoretically this document

exempted the Jews from several duties such as wearing the yellow star. Most of the free-passes were emitted by the Swiss and Swedish Consulates in Budapest.

The Swiss consul Karl Lutz asked for 7,000 emigration permits in April 1944. The emission of the Swedish Schutzpass for Hungarian Jews started with Raoul Wallenberg's assignment as consul in Hungary. Free-passes used to be emitted also by Spain, Portugal and the Vatican.

Although the number of free-passes was maximized to 15,600 in fall 1944, the real number of free-passes in circulation was much higher: 40-70,000 emitted by Switzerland, 7-10,000 by Sweden, 3,000 by Spain, not to mention the fake ones.

Beginning in mid-November 1944 and citing as a reason the high number and the falsification of passes, Arrow Cross groups started to also carry off those people who had a pass. During raids of Jewish houses, Arrow Cross groups shot all the tenants into the Danube.

14 Hungarian Workers' Party (MDP): Hungarian Workers' Party (Magyar Dolgozok Partja), the ruling Communist Party formed in 1948 with the merger of the communists and social democrats. Renamed MSZMP in 1956.

15 1956: It designates the Revolution, which started on 23rd October 1956 against Soviet rule and the communists in Hungary. It was started by student and worker demonstrations in Budapest and began with the destruction of Stalin's gigantic statue.

Moderate communist leader Imre Nagy was appointed as prime minister and he promised reform and democratization. The Soviet Union withdrew its troops which had been stationed in Hungary since the end of World War II, but they returned after Nagy's declaration that Hungary would pull out of the Warsaw Pact to pursue a policy of neutrality.

The Soviet army put an end to the uprising on 4th November, and mass repression and arrests began. About 200,000 Hungarians fled from the country. Nagy and a number of his supporters were executed. Until 1989 and the fall of the communist regime, the Revolution of 1956 was officially considered a counter-revolution.

16 Sachsenhausen: Concentration camp in Germany, operating between 1936 and April 1945. It was named after the Sachsenhausen quarter, part of the town of Oranienburg. It is estimated that some 200,000 prisoners passed through Sachsenhausen and that 30,000 perished there.

That number does not include the Soviet prisoners of war who were exterminated immediately upon arrival at the camp, as they were never even registered on the camp's lists. The number also does not account for those prisoners who died on the way to the camp, while being transferred elsewhere, or during the camp's evacuation.

Sachsenhausen was liberated by Soviet troops on 27th April, 1945. They found only 3,000 prisoners who had been too ill to leave on the death march. (Source: Rozett R. - Spector S.: Encyclopedia of the Holocaust, Facts on File, G.G. The Jerusalem Publishing House Ltd. 2000, pg. 396 - 398)

17 Death march: In fear of the approaching Allied armies, the Germans tried to erase all evidence of the concentration camps. They often destroyed all the facilities and forced all Jews regardless of their age or sex to go on a death march. This march often led nowhere and there was no specific

destination.

The marchers received neither food nor water and were forbidden to stop and rest at night. It was solely up to the guards how they treated the prisoners, if and what they gave them to eat and they even had in their hands the power on the prisoners' life or death. The conditions during the march were so cruel that this journey became a journey that ended in the death of most marchers.

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

19 Transylvania: Geographical and historical region belonging to Hungary until 1918-19, then ceded to Romania. Its area covers 103,000 sq.km between the Carpathian Mountains and the present-day Hungarian and Serbian borders. It became a Roman province in the 2nd century (AD) terminating the Dacian Kingdom.

After the Roman withdrawal it was overrun, between the 3rd and 10th centuries, by the Goths, the Huns, the Gepidae, the Avars and the Slavs. Hungarian tribes first entered the region in the 5th century, but they did not fully control it until 1003, when King Stephen I placed it under jurisdiction of the Hungarian Crown.

Later, in the 12th and 13th centuries, Germans, called Saxons (then and now), also arrived while Romanians, called Vlachs or Walachians, were there by that time too, although the exact date of their appearance is disputed. As a result of the Turkish conquest, Hungary was divided into 3 sections: West Hungary, under Habsburg rule, central Hungary, under Turkish rule, and semi-independent Transylvania (as a Principality), where Austrian and Turkish influences competed for supremacy for nearly two centuries.

With the defeat of the Turkish Transylvania gradually came under Habsburg rule, and due to the Compromise of 1867 it became an integral part of Hungary again. In line with other huge territorial losses fixed in the Treaty of Trianon (1920), Transylvania was formally ceded to Romania by Hungary.

For a short period during WWII it was returned to Hungary but was ceded to Romania once again after the war. Many of the Saxons of Transylvania fled to Germany before the arrival of the Soviet army, and more followed after the fall of the Communist government in 1989.

In 1920, the population of Erdély was 5,200,000, of which 3 million were Romanian, 1,400,000 Hungarian (26%), 510,000 German and 180,000 Jewish. In 2002, however, the percentage of Hungarians was only 19.6% and the German and Jewish population decreased to several thousand. Despite the decrease of the Hungarian, German and Jewish element, Transylvania still preserves some of its multiethnic and multi-confessional tradition.

20 Nationalization in Hungary: In the endeavors of transforming the society and economy after 1945, the liquidation of private property and the formation of centralized state property played an important role. The nationalization started with the 1945 land reform, which brought about nationalization of forests, model farms, reed works.

On 25th May 1946 they legalized the nationalization of mines and other establishments connected with them. At the end of 1946 they nationalized the five biggest industrial works of the country. The next step of the nationalization started in the fall of 1947 in a different political situation. The MKP (Hungarian Socialist Party) became very strong, and gradually it became the only party which made plans and took decisions, excluding the other parties from the process.

At the end of 1947 they nationalized the trade of goods belonging to the state monopoly (salt, matches, yeast, tobacco etc). They nationalized factories with more than 100 employees in 1948. They also liquidated companies in foreign ownership in Hungary by show trials.

In December 1949 they nationalized by order private companies, which employed 10 or more persons, and shortly after that they made impossible the functioning of workshops with more than 1-3 employees. (Ivan Peto - Sandor Szakacs: A hazai gazdasag negy evtizedenek tortenete 1945-1985, Budapest, 1985, KJK, pg. 95-104; Tibor Valuch: Magyarország tarsadalomtortenete, Budapest, 2001.)

21 Arrow Cross Party: The most extreme of the Hungarian fascist movements in the mid-1930s. The party consisted of several groups, though the name is now commonly associated with the faction organized by Ferenc Szalasi and Kalman Hubay in 1938. Following the Nazi pattern, the party promised not only the establishment of a fascist-type system including social reforms, but also the 'Solution of the Jewish Question'.

The party's uniform consisted of a green shirt and a badge with a set of crossed arrows, a Hungarian version of the swastika, on it. On 15th October 1944, when Governor Horthy announced Hungary's withdrawal from the war, the Arrow Cross seized power with military help from the Germans.

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

22 KISZ (Communist Youth League) (1957-1989): Massive youth organization created by the HCP in place of the DISZ, which disintegrated in 1956. It operated under the direct control of the HCP; its organizational structure was similar to that of the party (congress, central committee, secretariat, regional and local committees).

It aimed to represent the whole country's youth, sought to politically educate young people and supervise political as well as some social activities for them. Membership was open from the age of 14 to 26, but most full-time leaders of the organization were well over the age limit.

Membership was common, if rather pro forma, among university students (96 %) but lower among young people already working (31 %). In 1989 the organization's national congress changed the name to Democratic Youth Federation and declared it a voluntary league of independent youth organizations that would not accept direction from any single party.