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KATALIN WEISZ

Mrs. Iván Medgyesi (19 November, 1929 - 9 January 2011)

Profession: special needs teacher

Class: Attended the Zichy Street Elementary School from [1936 to 1940](#) List of class members for class 5, 5A ([List of class members](#))

"If my parents were listening to the radio at night, and I was already lying in bed, when I heard the national anthem at midnight, I would immediately get up and stand for the anthem."



SIBLINGS: [Lajos Steiner](#) ,died in the Holocaust. Károly Steiner survived the war, his son: [Endre Steiner](#)

Elemér, Margit Steiner returned. Elemér emigrated to Australia in 1938. Sándor Steiner died earlier. Out of six siblings one died in the Holocaust, one died earlier and four survived.

FATHER: József Weisz, died in Sachsenhausen.

His siblings: Imre Weisz, was shot in the Holocaust. Margit: she was deported, and she died.

Feri, Annus Weisz survived. Out of five siblings three died in the Holocaust.

PATERNAL GRANDFATHER: Kálmán Weisz

PATERNAL GRANDMOTHER: Regina Krausz

MOTHER: Sári Steiner

MATERNAL GRANDFATHER: József Steiner

MATERNAL GRANDMOTHER: Ilona Krausz

The family lived at 146-148 Lajos Street, in the house of the notary, Stern.

Before the war they had a spice shop at 60 Pacsirtamező Street.

Teachers, school, building

Among the teachers I liked both Ibolyka and Vándor. I have nice memories about the whole school. There was a corner in the yard, where we played 'Adj király katonát' ("King, give us a soldier", a game in which the task is to break the line of children holding hands). Mixed gender schools were rare at the time, before the war, especially among Jewish schools, because girls and boys were separated there. Our school was unique, and gave us the opportunity for all kinds of wild games. We had a good time.

In the yard, at the back there was a small flat where Mr. and Mrs. Bokor used to live. They were caretakers, every year they redecorated the school, by the time we returned after the summer holidays everything was beautiful and clean. In the winter they heated with coal in iron stoves. We loved them both. Sometimes I pretended that I had a stomach ache or this or that was the problem, then Mr. Bokor would walk me home to my father's spice shop at 60 Pacsirtamező Street. Mr. Bokor was happy, because he would always receive something from the shop. Lali Lampell carried my bag, and he also got two apples.

On the upper floor was the big hall, Principle Weisz lived there with his wife and two daughters.

At the end of Class 4, I did a farewell speech. Principle Béla Weisz kissed me on the cheek. I was so fond of him that I didn't wash that part of my face for a week.

Hungarian and Jewish holidays, double identity

One time, I held a children's party during {yootooltip title=[**Hanukkah**] width=[300]} **Hánukká (chanuka): „avatás”**

. Mari Kovács was wearing a dreidel dress, she was spun around and she came spinning into the room. We gave gifts to each other, we sang “Ma'oz Tzur”, the Hanukkah song in Hungarian. In the big hall there was a Purim ball, and we performed Esther's story several times. We were always very nervous, and it always turned out really well, we were praised.

We also had Hungarian folk costumes, a “bocskai” coat with trimming. I wore it proudly. Every noon it was announced: “These bells remind us of Nándorfehérvár, Hungary is also at war today.” On 15 March (Hungarian national holiday) we'd wear a Hungarian headdress, there were cornflowers pinned onto it.

National Anthem

If my parents were listening to the radio at night, and I was already lying in bed, when I heard the national anthem at midnight, I would immediately get up and stand for the anthem.



The synagogue in the old days

The synagogue was surrounded with a fence. We would mess around in the yard. On high holidays my grandmother would sit in the synagogue like a queen, surrounded by her daughters-in-law and daughters. After the war, on one Kol Nidre (this is the only time I go to the synagogue), I went alone to the Frankel synagogue, where Elemér Gálosi said to me: "My dear Kati! Are you sitting here all by yourself? Your grandmother used to sit in the synagogue like a queen with her family."

My mother, unlike me, used to love dressing up until the day she died. People used to say that it was quite an event, how my mother used to make an entrance in her new attire in the synagogue. God forbid, she could not be seen in two consecutive years in the same clothes.



Shops

On Vörösvári Road was the Brüll bakery. One of old Brüll's sons, Béla Brüll opened the confectionery on Vörösvári Road. Béla was buried here in the Jewish cemetery of Óbuda, by the way. In Tavaszi Street was the Floh confectionery.

Numerus clausus

In 1940, I started the Lázár Piroska Private Grammar School in Személynök Street, which school was somewhat the subsidiary of the Abonyi Street Jewish grammar school. I went to this private grammar school because I had not been accepted to the Ráskai Lea Grammar School in Szemere Street, even though I had the top marks in every subject. The principle told me very politely and kindly that he was in great need of such a good student, but due to the current provisions he, unfortunately, could not accept me.

Discrimination, Christians of various types

“My parents never chose their friends on the basis of whether they were Jewish or not.”

I remember that somebody told my father once that he usually did not like Jews, but he did like my father. And my father answered that if he didn't like the other Jews, he should not like him either. I cannot understand, because we had a lot of non-Jewish guests, my parents never chose their friends on the basis of whether they were Jewish or not. This is a nasty thing.

There were Christian families without children, like the Gyuricas, who were really fond of me. I was spoilt and loved in several Christian families. This is a strange thing. Our house, 146-148 Lajos Street, from which there isn't a single trace left, had stairs at its entrance. On the ground floor there was a bank and opposite was the workshop of a sculptor. On the three floors there were eight flats altogether. On the top floor, above us lived Dr. István Boks, a physician of the HSR Hospital. He was said to be a terribly big Nyilas (Hungarian Nazi). However, before we moved into the Jewish house, but we already had to hand in our radio, whenever interference flights were announced, he'd knock on our ceiling. With us he behaved very decently, though he was said to be a wild-eyed guy.

I have another memory about this. There was a family, good friends of ours, we played a lot with their kids (I won't mention names), my mother did them a lot of favours. In this family an old, unmarried lady died, at least she seemed old to me at the time. When we were already in the ghetto, I somehow found my way out and went to this family to ask for the documents of this deceased lady, so that my mother could save herself with them. I got told off in a vulgar tone, even though when I arrived, I told them to send the children out, because this is not something they should hear. We were then adults at the age of 15... The person told me: If they had known that I was capable of such foulness, and that I wanted to desecrate the memory of her deceased sister, she would never have let me into her house. I was told to get the hell out. The person spoke really nastily. I left. Years later, I met the daughter of this person, who asked me why we weren't in touch any more. “I have no idea”, I said.

But there were very decent ones, there were huge differences. A friend of mine just died, her name was Mariann Hubay, her mother posted an advertisement in '44 saying: “I am looking to employ a mother with child in a closed villa in Svábhegy as household employee”. A Jewish woman with a little boy applied – he was circumcised, so it wasn't a simple business, and they kept them there. Later the boy ended up in Israel, he became a doctor. He said later, that he wasn't at all treated there as the employee's child, but as if he was their own Gábor's brother. (The Yad Vashem awarded the Hubay Family – as recommended by the saved doctor – with

the Righteous Among the Nations title.)

This same Hubay's brother, a guy called Kálmán Hubay came home in chains with Szálasi (head of the Nazi Nyilas/Arrow Cross Party), and they were hung together. He was the brother of the decent Hubay, who had three children, so she had enough to worry about. Moreover, she advertised in the newspaper. There was such great difference between one person and another! There was a confectionery, still existing today called Pöhm, they posted a sign in 1939-40 saying, WE DO NOT SERVE DOGS AND JEWS. At the same time, there was another, who had a sweet shop in Selmeci Street, and he put out the fresh goods exactly, when the Jewish people were free to come out, between 11 am and 2 pm. There were such huge differences between people.

Yellow star

"...this is a pretty ornament, no need to be ashamed of it!"

I remember when we put on the first star, I really resented it. My mother said: this is a pretty ornament, no need to be ashamed of it!

Looting

"...and then the rucksack was also gone, nothing was left."

My father was privileged from World War I. He had silver knight awards. The business was best at the spice shop at 60 Pacsirtamező Street, when in the other Jewish shops it was not allowed to sell drinks, coffee, etc. any more. In 1944, the shop equipped with a full stock: drinks, copper coffee jars and everything else was closed down and looted. Later we got nothing back from this. After the war, in a smaller part of the shop a state-owned milk shop was opened.

My mother, after my father did not return, became an employee at the milk shop. A doctor from Tata moved into our flat, and threw all our stuff out into the yard saying, he doesn't want any Jewish stuff. The people in the area came and took whatever they could, on a first come, first served basis. Three years later I still met someone wearing my clothes. I thought, whatever. The furniture, everything was taken.

My mother had a very good friend. My father changed the cover of a suite of furniture at her house, and they hid jewellery and some other valuables into one of the furniture. This friend who received the furniture claimed that the Russian soldier who came, cut the cover of that very one. Somewhere else we gave a set of 12 silver utensils for safekeeping, and they told us that the Russian soldier separated it: he left six and took six. You can imagine, how he was counting: one teaspoon for me, the other for you. We got half of it back. But we didn't care.

From one place to the next we moved with a wagon, from there with a cart, to the third place we only took a rucksack, and then the rucksack was also gone, nothing was left.

15 year-old adults

I was more adult than my mum. From Kőbánya I came downtown to Király utca. Without any documents, I got off the tram, wherever there was an identity check. With my big curly hair, I shouted “Heil Hitler!” and I walked on. But how this occurred to me is a mystery. I wasn’t even 15 years old. I was not yet wearing the yellow star at that time.



The Nyilas people (Hungarian Nazis), the destruction of the Baron Family, deportation

On 15th October 1944, a great proportion of the Jewish people in Óbuda had been gathered into the Vörösvári Road school on the corner of Körte Street. We were kept there for three or four days. On the other side, there was a private house, Vilmos Baron’s shop and family house, and since it was a Jewish house, a yellow-star house, at least 20 people were gathered in that flat with two or three rooms. These butchers arrived and went berserk, they slaughtered the whole Baron Family. The 14 year-old Zsuzsi, the 18 year-old Ervin, the parents, the relatives, they were piled up in front of the house. The only surviving Baron relative, Aranka Kiss was later pulled out of a pile of corpses in front of the synagogue by Doctor Tometz, when he heard her whimper. Tometz was pressurised by a Nyilas not to intervene, but Tometz, referring to the

Hippocratic Oath, helped and saved a life. Doctor Tometz lived in Lajos Street, right opposite the synagogue.

In the Baron Family, Zsuzsi and Ervin were talented violin players, and the boy was already playing in some quartet. He was very good-looking. At the time I also lived in a yellow-star house, in 77 Vörösvári Road, the family house of my uncle Steiner, together with four related families. Since Zsuzsi was my classmate, Ervin came over to tell me that Zsuzsi wasn't feeling well, and I should go visit her. In the morning he and my father were talking about politics, but the visit never happened, because that was when the trouble started.

My classmate's, Éva Winter's father was shot the same day, because he was reading a newspaper, and he covered the yellow star with his hand. Since the star could not be seen, he was shot immediately. Éva Winter's sister, Gabi was deported, she didn't come back. As far as I know, Vali Sonnenwirth was also deported.



At 77 Vörösvári Road, in the yellow-star house we lived together with my cousins, and my mother's siblings. We had a great time, as there was a closed yard, the children altogether. On the other side, the first house was the Baron's, so if the Nyilas people didn't happen to start there, they would have killed us. There was a shoemaker, for example, and when we were led we didn't know where, with our hands held up, this shoemaker stood in the door of his workshop, the "Schusterei", and said: "This is the moment, which I have long been waiting for." He had Hitler's portrait up on the wall of his workshop for quite a while already. His name was Kurverger.

At the Vörösvári Road School we were led into a cellar, where there was water mixed with blood. It is possible that previously some people had been beaten to death there. For two days we were out in the yard day and night, then they let us go home. Why this happened, I don't

know. The men and the women were made to stand separately.

My last memory of my father: he was wearing a beautiful winter coat then, in October. Everyone put on some winter coat, because we didn't know where we were taken. My father's coat had a Persian collar. My father wasn't very tall, he was a stocky man, and a much taller built Nyilas guy went up to him, and took his winter coat. My mother started to cry. My father opened his jacket and showed her that he was wearing a jumper, he wouldn't be cold. This is a terrible memory to me. I don't remember what happened later, even though we went home. But his smile, his kindness, the way he calmed my mother...

Escape

"Our age group is a fatherless generation"

Our age group is a fatherless generation. If four of us are together, then definitely three are fatherless or motherless, although more mothers survived. In the June of 1944 from 146-148 Lajos Street, we were moved to a Jewish house at 77 Vörösvári Road, then from there to somewhere near Zsigmond Square, then to the ghetto, to 4 Wesselényi Street. And from there to Kőbánya, to a children's home.

The Zichy Street after World War II.

After the war, Joint established a kitchen and a daycentre in the school from American donations. We went there after school lessons. A non-religious Zionist, "SOMER" organisation was founded there. We got lunch, and we played a lot in the yard. We stayed there primarily because there was heating, and in our flats it was cold, and we also received food.

A Zionist girl called Vera Nádor was organising things, and I even became a member of the SOMER. At Christmas we went to a skiing camp at Dobogókő. Later, we moved to 92 Lajos Street, near the Amphitheatre. When I was 16 years old, I supervised the daycentre before and after my lessons, and doing my job, I played with the children. Once a teacher of mine, who lived in the neighbourhood, told me off: "You're playing with the children instead of studying at home!"

The movement was banned in '48, until then we stayed there. The House of the Elderly was also in Zichy Street, in the rooms of the four classes of the former school. Many old people lived there who survived in the ghetto, but their children had died, or their flats had been looted and they had nowhere to go. There were sad stories.

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Places of residence:

146-148 Lajos Street.

77 Vörösvári Road. – yellow-star house

4 Wesselényi Street. – ghetto

92 Lajos Street.

Shops/Institutions:

60 Pacsirtamező Street –József Weisz's spice shop

Vörösvári Road – Brüll bakery, confectionery

Tavaszi Street – Floh confectionery

Személynök Street – Lázár Pirooska Private Grammar School

Abonyi Street – Jewish grammar school

Szemere Street – Ráskai Lea Grammar School

Selmeci Street – sweetshop

Corner of Körte Street and Vörösvári Road – school



My schoolmates and teachers in the Osuda Jewish Day School in 1939-40. According to the





853 Ócsa, 26, Egnád, 2, Ifj.techn.iskola, 29, USÁ-s Gy. Szendrői, 12, Országos Sinác, 1, Károly Weiss, 5) etc.