

**JUDITH BALASSA ZUCKER**  
**BORN 1934**  
**KRUPINA IN SLOVAKIA**

Judith Balassa was born about 1934 in the small town Krupina in Slovakia, the Eastern part of Czechoslovakia. She and her older sister had a normal and happy childhood with many friends. Her father was one of seven physicians in town and he also was a dentist. Her mother was trained as a pharmacist. She shows pictures of her family and of their house where her father's office was located.

Their lives changed about 1940 when an uncle, a physician in another village, was dismissed and came to live with them. All Jewish businesses were closed or placed under non-Jewish management. Her father, as head of the local Jewish community, could continue to work but only as a dentist.

In 1939 after the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, Bohemia and Moravia, the Western parts of the Country, became a German protectorate, while Slovakia became a separate state under the control of Germany. She never saw German soldiers until near the end of the war but most of the local population were just as bad as the Nazis.

In 1941, young men, including her uncle were taken to a labor camp in Nowaki. Her father tried to get her uncle out but could not find a job for him. Many people tried to flee to Hungary where the Jews had been left alone and did not anticipate what was to come. In 1943, her uncle was taken to Birkenau and after a few days was shot when the Germans killed every tenth man in a line-up after some incident. Her grandparents, both teachers, lived about 40 miles away in the part of the country given to Hungary by the Germans. They both were deported and her grandmother died in a cattle car. Their son was taken to a labor camp but escaped and joined them in their home.

As a Jew, she was kicked out of her school and a small Jewish school was formed. They had only two rooms and two teachers but received an excellent Jewish and general education. Once, when she was six years old, she was beaten up by a boy, about twelve, and nobody interfered.

About 1940 everything of value was confiscated and the local people just took whatever they wanted. After the war, only six or seven families returned of the about 60 who used to live in the town.

An underground resistance movement started to develop. They were helped by four parachutists who were sent by the British from Palestine and had originally come from the area. They were soon caught and executed. She has a photograph of a group of young friends most of whom were deported and killed. She also has a small plastic David's star of her father which exempted him from some restrictions, everyone else had to wear an arm band.

When the Russian front approached, the uprising was helped by some Russian parachutists (she has a picture) but it was soon suppressed by the German army. The few Jews still left went into hiding or tried to flee to Hungary. She was with a small group that went into the Low Tatra mountains with her father as leader. She shows the decoration he received after the war for his activities. It was Winter and they had to struggle hard to find food. They had many narrow escapes. She was lucky that she did not loose any fingers or toes because of frostbite. Her father always carried poison with him because he did not want to be captured. In 1945, they crossed the Russian front and later could return to their hometown where the Germans had told everybody that they all had been killed. In 1949 she went to Israel.

She told her story to her boys because she felt that it is important to know what inhumanities can happen.