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Summary

Dr. Tova Feldman was born in August 1929, in Budapest, Hungary. Her father was a merchant in the textile business. She was the eldest of four children in an ordinary family. She said that she does not recall most of what transpired during the war years and believes that she deliberately erased the events from her memory. She also stated that she did not want to speak of her family because it was difficult for her to do so.

She remembered that the Germans entered Hungary on March 19, 1944. In 1942 or 1943, she had joined the **Shomer Hazair** [a secular Zionist youth movement]. After attending a few meetings, her father, though not a religious man, no longer allowed her to participate. He connected the movement to communism. She rejoined Shomer Hazair approximately two years after the war ended. She attended a Jewish primary school and thereafter a professional school where she studied chemistry. At the time, she was aware in a general way that bad things were happening to the Jews in Europe, that people were being taken away, but she did not actually know what was going on. For example, she had not heard of **Wallenberg** or **Kastner**. She was a child and her life simply continued.

Once the Germans entered Budapest, her family remained in their apartment but additional people were brought in to live with them. In 1972, she wrote a poem in English about the day that her father was taken away which was on or about October 20th. She read the last verse aloud to the interviewer: the last days were good ones, they had no warning of what was going to happen but as he was being taken away, her father asked for a pair of warm pajamas which she hurriedly ran to bring to him. She took a picture of him from the window as he vanished from her sight. She kissed the picture and began to cry, "only then and never again." Her father was the only one from the immediate family not to survive the war.

Her interactions were not with the Germans. The Hungarian police dealt with the Jews. Though not beaten, she was treated very roughly. Her family was placed in a house along with other Jews under crowded conditions for about 3 days. She recalled going up to the roof with her sister. Other young people were there. Someone taught them a song that filled them with hope. The house was under the protection of the embassy of Sweden. The family was given official papers. After a few days everyone was forcibly chased outside along with shouted accusations that the papers were forgeries. They were separated by age. Initially, someone from the Iron Cross put her in one group, supposedly to work. Her mother and siblings were assigned to a different group. Her mother gave her birth certificate to her which she showed to a policeman. He said that she belonged in the group with her mother. She subsequently heard that everyone in the first group was shot and killed on the banks of the Danube on that very day. She and her family were then taken to the ghetto. They were forced to give the Heil Hitler salute. The same policeman who had helped her earlier approached her and sang to her a well-known song, everything passes someday.

She recalled only a few things from the ghetto period, among them that in her dreams she smelled cake, that she felt happy when the bombs were falling because that meant that someone was bombing, and that one day, a man said that the Russians were only one street away, however no one believed him. The day that the Russians entered the ghetto was a great day; not only were they told that they could remove the yellow star, but, also, that they could

help break down the ghetto wall which was right next to the house in which they lived. She believes that she survived because she was lucky.

She asked the interviewer to conclude the interview, that she was worried that it might cause her sleepless nights, and that even filling out the page that she had provided to Yad Vashem was very difficult. She apologized to the interviewer for not being able to continue. At that point the interviewer concluded the interview.