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Summary

Dr. Eva Kieselstein was born in 1930 in Budapest. Her mother, Gisela, was a homemaker, and her father, Yanur (sp), was a clerk at a company owned by a Jewish man. In 1939-40, they needed documents that showed they were Hungarian. After attending a regular elementary school, she attended a Jewish gymnasia (secondary school) until 1946.

In 1940, her father was sent to a forced labor camp and then to Ukraine. One person in the group who returned told them that her father had been beaten to death. The owner of the company where her father had worked paid a partial salary to her mother, who did odd jobs to support them, and Eva babysat and tutored. They lived in Pest.

People were terrified after the Germans entered Budapest. A few days after the occupation, the Americans were bombing. After that, Hungarian fascists entered their building looking for Jews. They entered their home and told them to leave, so that someone who lost their home in the bombing could move in. They moved in with a relative in another part of Budapest. She remembers that it felt like being a marked animal having to wear the yellow star when she went out. They moved into a building for Jews. For a while she went with her mother who was forced to clean up after bombings. They saw the trains that the Germans brought back filled with goods. They also saw cattle cars with Jews and Russian POWs. They were forbidden to get near those train cars. Around September, they heard that a ghetto was being organized. They stayed in their building until Szálasi came to power. Their building was then under the protection of the Vatican, so they did not have to go to the ghetto. She saw that people with Swedish documents were still taken. They next went to a Vatican building in a very nice neighborhood. Her mother asked some people to hide them, but they refused.

Around Christmas, the Russians surrounded Budapest. At that point, groups of people were taken to the Danube and shot. With her mother and others, she was taken to the ghetto and put into a crowded apartment. They were starving. The Wehrmacht entered the yard with an anti-aircraft cannon. Then, one morning they noticed the quiet and they saw that the Russians had entered Budapest. She thinks it was around January 19. The Germans then began bombing from Pest.

They went back to their own apartment where they were given one room. Hardly any of her relatives or friends came back from the camps. A relative, Sanbar, returned from the camps and they went to his home in Kecskemé. When they heard that things were opening up, she and her mother returned to Budapest. She went back to school, but it was devastating because so few of her classmates were alive.

She finished gymnasia and went to medical school in the Soviet Union. In 1956 she returned to Hungary at the time of the rebellion and was witness to rising antisemitism. She decided not to live in Hungary, so she and her mother left with nothing. She feels that she's from another planet because of her experiences.