

## **RG-50.407.0198**

### **Summary**

Fania (née Socol) Molnar was born in Bialystok; she had two brothers, one younger and one older, Jacob (Jack) and Hersch (Harry), respectively. Her father and grandfather owned a textile factory (Socol and Sons). The family was well-to-do and maintained a kosher house; Fania spoke mostly Polish with her mother and Yiddish with her father. She remembers feeling little anti-Semitism in Poland. After gymnasium in 1929, the family immigrated to Brussels for economic reasons with her father running a cardboard carton company.

Fania studied nursing and afterwards began work at a local hospital. Her parents moved to a Hungarian provincial town again running a textile factory in about 1937. In late 1938, early 1939, she Hungary to see her parents. Due to Hitler's rise, her parents convinced her to stay in Hungary. When the war erupted, they chose to leave for Budapest in 1940-41. They permitted many Polish refugees to stay with them and learned of the persecutions there. Their Hungarian friends never thought such events could happen in Hungary. Hungarian authorities expelled many Polish Jews back to Poland, but her family hid with friends.

Fania married to a Hungarian Jew from Mohács in May, 1943 despite her husband's assignment to a labor camp. In 1944, the Germans came into Hungary and created a ghetto in Budapest, but her family avoided it for a while. But, as things got "hot", a Christian family outside Budapest hid her parents and her for cash. Her husband was sent to a Polish camp for a while, but returned as the Hungarians retreated before the Russians.

After the Hungarians surrendered, Germans began to deport Jews of all nationalities. Fania and her parents shuttled between various houses, including so-called Swedish or Swiss "protected houses", outside the ghetto to avoid arrest. She was temporarily detained twice but managed to arrange her release. Her husband returned at that time when Russians arrived in late 1944. They both became interpreters. Her first child, Robert, was born in November 1945. Through an uncle they arranged a permit to Melbourne in June 1946, but the transit was difficult due to her parents' passport issues. Ultimately, she transited through the U.S.

Both brothers were involved with the resistance through the Rota Capella (Red Orchestra). Her brother Harry died in a Nazi prison in Belgium, while his wife, Myra (née Rockland) disappeared. Jacob was sent to Mauthausen as a Belgian political prisoner with his Jewishness unknown, but released by the Red Cross in May 1945. Fania's daughter Miriam was born in Melbourne.