

RG-50.407.0223

Summary

Gabor Kony – Born August 13, 1924 in Budapest, Hungary.

Father – Vincent (Youngest of 15 children); **Mother** – Blanca Bernhart (only child), born in northern Hungary. Maternal grandparents came to live with them in 1938.

Before the War (Up to 1944) – Family - upper-middle class. Father had glass business. Had a nanny till was 3, learned to speak German before Hungarian. Attended Jewish elementary school and then gymnasium. Economic downturn in 1932-33; father lost business, then worked meager jobs. Mother went to work. Graduated from school in 1942. Wanted to attend university to become doctor, but Jews weren't allowed in university (starting in 1942) so learned glass business.

During the War – Restrictions began in May 1944. Sent to Hungarian forced labor camp in Hadoslobaslov (?). Taken by normal train, stayed in open shed. Both Jews and Gentiles taken but Gentiles went into army; Jews did not. Russians started bombing so unit sent back to Budapest to fight fires; Kony also did first aid. Then worked on glass replacement. He did not have to wear yellow star because in the army. Could use public transportation. In army from May till November 13, 1944, lodged in school. Had a "Shutz" pass which allowed him to go back to labor camp to get his father. Mother moved to ghetto in Sept. 1944. November 13th, left army camp and became a fugitive because went to doctor who diagnosed broken rib. Told him to go home and rest, so went to where parents lived. Nov. 14th, Nazis came to house, ordered everyone out. Because had broken rib, police told him to go back to bed. His mother helped and then went downstairs. Father and mother taken. Next day, Kony went to "Glass House" where Wallenberg was and got Shutz passes for mother and father. Father was found, mother was not. Ghetto closed (12/44), used pass to get medicine for ghetto hospital. Did until January 18, 1945, Russians arrived, opened ghetto

After the War – Kony stayed in Budapest; got married to his best friend's sister, Mari, in 1948. Socialists (communists?) took over, Jews became enemies of the nation and they decided to leave (had 2 girls by that time.) Could not get out of Hungary. After the 1956 revolution, were smuggled out of Hungary and taken to Vienna where they (had 3 children – Susan, Georgina, and Tom then) got "grey cards". Helped by HIAS and others. Went from Vienna to Strasburg, then to Genoa. Took the first ship to Australia – Aurelia – arrived in Sydney on 1/31/57. Became a manager of a glass business; moved to Melbourne.

His Thoughts – Went to Australia because it was the farthest away he could get from Hungary. Believes everyone should "Trust Yourself!"