

JOSE PETERI

His biologic Father was Joseph Zinger. Peteri is the name of his adopting Father. He did not know his Father as he died as a Hungarian soldier on the Russian front.

Born in Budapest, Hungary on 3/31/1942. Two years later on 3/19/1944 German troops occupied Hungary, and a massive persecution of Jews began. His Mother was alone with him (2 years old), their apt. was bombed and not having where to stay more than for a couple of days at a time they moved from homes to homes. Because of the bombings they spent time in shelters under the buildings, in the dark for hours. One day his Mother with him and her sister, his Aunt, were on the street when a Nazi round up took place. Both Mother and Aunt wore the yellow star and the 3 of them were taken. As the child he was separated from his Mother. She said to her sister that they have to try to escape and look for her son. His Aunt was afraid, did not want to do it; she ended up in Bergen Belsen. His Mother saw a man standing on the side observing the event, grab his arm and said: save me. They walked away holding each other and after a few blocks each one went its own way, no idea who this man was.

Mother was desperate wondering where her son was, 2 weeks passed. She had placed under her child's clothing in an envelope made of material a document with a false name for him and some money, so who would find him would have something for his care. His Mother and another Aunt kept looking for him and found him in a Ghetto where they pretended to go for work. Asking to a group of children on the street, they could identify him. It was a miracle. The night she lost him she was so desperate that she wanted to commit suicide by drowning in the Danube and on her way another miracle happened: she met a cousin of hers who was in the resistance, wore an SS uniform, who took her to a hotel, got her false papers, obtained clothing for her and a house not in the Ghetto, (he does not know names or addresses of people involved). War ended April 1945.

A significant number of the Family did not survived, they lived out of town, Paternal Grandfather died 2 months before his birth, Grandmother was in a concentration camp and survived. At this point his Mother stated we will have a Home, a good apartment, and they heard a knock at the door. To their great surprise it was Grandmother who had walked many hours after liberated from the camp. From then on she lived with them and went to Chile as well. The situation for them in Hungary was not good, they did not fit in the communist regime, they had not been workers nor peasants, so they were kind of persecuted but not as Jews.

In 1946 Mother remarried: Gaspar Schlesinger, Mother knew him from before the war. He had been at the Russian Front as well, and came back, ill and skinny. He came from a rich family. He was an excellent person and a very good Father. My brother Andres was born and although we had different Fathers we consider ourselves true brothers. Gaspar inherited a factory from his Father, but under the regime it was taken over by the State without compensation. Gaspar was a chemical engineer worked for a State concern on medicines. They had to share an apartment with another family. There was no antisemitism. Studied 1 year of Gymnasium and in 1956, Hungarian revolution, time to leave.

Jose started school at age 7 in Budapest until 1957 when the family escaped. The family was not Orthodox but kept Jewish traditions.

On December 13, 1956 we closed the door to our apt. and gave the key to an Aunt, we have to get to Austria, walked 6 hours towards the village of Mother and Grandmother which was about 50 kms. from the Austrian border. Prior to the family departure arrangements were made with people living in that community for border crossing, it did not go as smoothly as expected and the 5 members of their family plus another family walked at night and in the morning they found themselves in a Austrian village. They had to sleep in a stable as the village was full of refugees. The Father who spoke German bought train tickets for Vienna. Upon arriving they looked for a place to stay, they did not have friends or family in Vienna, the mother had heard of the Rothschild Hospital but it was small and they could not stay. After being unsuccessful and tired his Mother became hysterical and a police officer asked about their problem. He decided to help them, he took them to the police station where they slept in an empty cell, this could not be done the following day, a Sunday, and were taken to the general jail where they stayed overnight with other prisoners. In the morning they could shower and had breakfast, and left those facilities. It was then that his mother met a cousin who was leaving for the USA the next day, so they could inherit their room.

Through "caritas" Father received money to pay their trip to Chile, via Buenos Aires. Peteri was an acquired family name (false documents), an older brother had come to Chile in 1946, had kept the old family name and was known as Nicolas Schlesinger, the other 2 brothers were named Peter and Peteri, 3 brothers--3 names. The last 2 consolidated as Peteri. They went to Chile crossing the Andes and with the necessary visa. They settled well, he went to school, at 19 years of age went to Argentina to work but came back to Chile, married, divorced, had no children.

His Mother worked for awhile at home on a knitting machine, his Father was a chemical engineer and worked at the University and in 1960 was employed at the University of Concepcion. His brother Andres lives in Santiago, is married and has 3 children.