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Summary

Katalin Sztranyiczki, born Mráz in 1935, Bucharest, Romania. Her father was Roman Catholic, her mother, Magdolna Schützberger (1916), was Jewish. Her mother had four siblings: older brother Béla, and three older sisters: Aranka, Mancsi, and Ilonka. Her father earned his living with picture framing, her mother was a shoe factory worker. Neither side of the family was religious, thus the mixed marriage was not contentious. They did not go to church, they did not keep religious or culinary customs. Her parents met through the youth section of the workers' movement. Her mother and her sisters were political activists, especially Ilonka.

Her parents moved a lot; her first childhood memories are of Budapest where she went to kindergarten and the first two grades of elementary school, in Sziv Street. They lived at Eötvös St. 34, in a big apartment building. She had Catholic religious instruction and first communion in Budapest, after it turned out in school that she knew nothing about religion. She also has vague memories of an air raid.

In 1944, her father was called up for military service. Her mother moved with her to Nagyvárad (Oradea, Romania), because she felt safer there and her father-in-law needed care.

Her mother did not wear the Yellow Star and moved around freely. She later learned that her mother tried to convert without success. She noticed that her mother packed a suitcase and from time to time, she added to or took things from it. She was prepared to go to a labor camp and help her sister Mancsi with work. The common belief was that the Jews would be sent to work. Her sister Ilonka was previously arrested for political reasons and sent to a concentration camp.

Once, going to the market, her mother noticed a new plank fence: the ghetto. Sometime in the summer, her mother was visiting a friend with her when she noticed a column of people moving on the street. As it turned out, they were Jews being marched to the railway station. Her mother saw her sister, Mancsi, holding the hands of her own child and Ilonka's. Her mother went with them to the railway station, where a gendarme sent her away, and as she refused, he asked for her papers. Her mother produced her father's cards from the frontline, saying that she left her papers at home. The gendarmes let her go. After the deportations, gendarmes once came for her mother, but only the old grandfather was at home, and the gendarmes did not return. She said that her mother was daring and always kept her presence of mind. Her mother also knew that she, the daughter, being Christian, was safe.

On being asked, she said that she only became aware of her mother's Jewishness when they moved to Nagyvárad. She did not really understand what it meant, but sensed that her mother was in danger.

After the war, her father came home. Later, she had a brother, Mihály, 16 years her junior. Both parents joined the Romanian Communist Party, but became disenchanted under Ceausescu.

Of her mother's family, only Ilonka (married: Berger) survived.

She attended university in journalism and philosophy. She taught Marxist philosophy.

She married and both she and her husband were Communist Party members. She did not wish to discuss ideological issues.