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**Summary**

Piroska Moskovics Lévy was born on February 29, 1928 in Beregszász (Berehovo), Czechoslovakia. Her father came to Beregszász from Máramaros (Marmatei, Romania) and worked as a storekeeper for a well-to-do wholesaler, Dezső Kain. The Moskovics family members were shopkeepers for generations. Her mother (born Feige) hailed from Leskőfalva (Lieskovany, Slovakia). Both her father and mother had two other siblings, but they had seven children: Helén (1913), Dóra (1916), Jolán (1920), Ida (1922), Rózsi (1923), Piroska (1928), and a boy, Hermann (?). They were very religious. Her father broke off contacts to his siblings because they were not religious. Her mother had a wig. She kept a strictly kosher kitchen. They celebrated Sabbath and all holidays. The family only spoke Yiddish ("Jewish") on Sabbath, otherwise Hungarian at home. Every child had a Hebrew name as well.

Her father served in WWI in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and was a Hungarian patriot. They lived on Ujvásártér 2, close to the Kisállomás (the smaller railway station), where the merchandise arrived for the Kain business. They had Jewish (Berkovics, a carpenter) Hungarian (Árvai), and Russian neighbors, all tradesmen. Piroska and her siblings attended the Hungarian school. Once a week, they had Czech lessons. She fondly remembered her teacher, Janka Hofmann. She did not experience any discrimination before the Hungarian occupation.

In 1938 [correctly: March 1939], when Hungary reoccupied Carpatho-Ruthenia, her father was very happy at first, but then they heard that Hungarian troops beat up some Jews in Beregszász. The anti-Jewish laws affected them too, although her father still worked, and they went to school. The girls all learned to be seamstresses. Her two older sisters, Helén and Ida became excellent seamstresses. She learned only for a just over a year because the war intervened.

In 1940-1941, the family had to acquire papers to prove that they were Hungarian citizens. Papers for her two sisters, Dóra and Jolán did not arrive on time and although they as all the other children were born in Beregszász, they were transported to Kamenets-Podolsk. For a while, a neighbor, a shoemaker hid them, but the authorities threatened that they would take the entire family unless the girls gave themselves up. She remembers how her father cried when her sisters had to leave. Many people were taken from Beregszász, and no one returned. The official explanation was that they had been taken for "work," but after no news came, nobody believed it. Then rumors spread that the Jews were killed, but they could not believe that either.

She continued school and was apprenticed as a seamstress to Adolf Lebovics until 1944. In school, they had a very anti-Semitic geography teacher, who called the Jewish pupils "stinky Jews" and "dirty Jews," and vowed to fail them at the end of the school year. She did not remember the German occupation in 1944. But she remembered that, in the spring, they had to put on the Yellow Star.

After Passover in 1944, they had to move to the ghetto. The local gendarmes went from house to house. They knew her father and told him that they would start

rounding up the Jews at the other end of the street and thus give more time for the Moskovics family to pack their belongings. Her sister, Idu (Ida) earned well as a seamstress and had jewelry. One of the gendarmes told her that he would take it to the ghetto for her, which he did. All of the jewelry was, however, taken away before the entrapment.

The ghetto was in a brick factory. She remembered that it was crowded, because families from villages around Beregszász were also taken there. She didn't remember much else, except that they were entrained on 17 [May] and arrived in Auschwitz on 20 [May]. She did not remember any details of the train journey, except that there was only one bucket for all the people in the wagon and people from Sátoraljaujhely were in the same transport. Her family was together except for her sister Helén, who had previously married and lived in Tiszabecse with her husband (Lajos Farkas) and her eight-year-old son.

In Auschwitz, she was separated from her parents. Her mother and brother went into a different direction. She only learned from members of the *Sonderkommando* in the following days that they were gassed immediately. She assumed that the same happened to her father who was 67 years old. She stayed together with her two sisters, Rózsi, who was her favorite, and Ida. They were tattooed. Her number was A6615, while Ida's was A6613, and Rózsi's A6614. Her own number is only partially visible, because her skin became infected and the pus obscured some of the tattoo. They also got gray uniform clothing. She remembered that the *Blockälteste* was Aliz [sp?], a Slovak woman. She worked in one of the "Canada" barracks in a commando that sorted bedding (pillows, small pillows, duvets, and covers), packed them together, and delivered the bundles by truck to Auschwitz train station. Working in the "Canada" was not very strenuous, but they had to stand in *Zellappel* at dawn and late evening for several hours.

Once they saw people from Beregszász arriving in Auschwitz, who were being sent to the gas chambers but they hid from them, because they did not want to tell them what their fate was.

She also saw her sister Helén once, whom she did not recognize first, because she was so thin, but Helén called her name. Helén's son was gassed with her mother-in-law. She, with the help of her sisters managed to smuggle some food to Helén.

Through the *Sonderkommando*, she also heard rumors about a plan to blow up all five crematoria. At the end, only one was blown up, the one that never functioned and was closest to the "Canada" barracks. Helén worked on the clean-up of that crematorium when they saw each other.

They often heard screaming and crying from the gas chambers when new transports arrived. There was a period of time when train after train came, day and night from Hungary. There was smoke and terrible stench.

On January 18, 1945 they left Auschwitz on foot. The train station of Auschwitz was already occupied by the Russians. They marched for three days and three nights, in very cold weather. They received a small loaf of bread before they left, and they managed to steal some clothes to protect themselves from the cold. Rózsi was very weak, could barely walk. She and Ida dragged her as much as they could, stopping for short rests. They did not want to fall behind or get out of the line, because the SS guards

on motorcycles shot those prisoners who could not keep up with the group. Finally, in Frankfurt [am Main(?), Germany], they boarded a train. In open wagons, they were transported to Ravensbrück concentration camp. It was extremely cold, and they were starving. Rózsi was at the end of her rope. They got some warm tea in Ravensbrück, but the camp was overcrowded and they stayed in canvas tents. After about two weeks, in February, they were transported to “Malhof” [probably Malchow, a sub-camp of Ravensbrück]. They stayed in barracks there, and she dug trenches.

On May 2, the prisoners had to go on a foot march again, stopping in Breslau [Wrocław, Poland], where Russians liberated them. The Russians fed them gradually and carefully. After they regained their strength, they were sent by various means of transportation; ship on the Elbe river, horse- drawn carriage, truck, bus, and train – to Prague, Pozsony (Bratislava, Slovakia), and Budapest. Somehow, she lost her two sisters at one of these stations, and would see them only 12 years later. She was registered in Budapest, at the church on Bethlen tér. Someone yelled to her at Hatvan railway station, on the way to Budapest that her sister Helén was alive, and already in Tiszabecse. First, however, she went back Beregszász. She found no family members. The family home was occupied by strangers. The neighbor, Mrs. Árvai, with whom she stayed for a night, had several objects from her family home. She went back to Hungary, to Tiszabecse where she and her sister restarted their lives. Helén’s husband had died in forced labor in Bor (Serbia), her son and in-laws in Auschwitz. By the time Ida and Rózsi returned to Beregszász, she was not able to join them, because the border to the Soviet Union was closed.

Helén remarried a few years later.

She wanted to go to Palestine, but the cold she had endured in the last phase of the war, caused her such pain that a doctor sent her to the warm spa of Hajduszoboszló. She met her husband, Imre Lévy, on that occasion. He had survived 27 months of forced labor in Ukraine. They married in 1947 and she lived her life in Hajduszoboszló. Her husband came from a family of innkeepers and continued this trade after the war. She also worked in various positions and capacities in the restaurant and hotel service. They had a happy marriage and three daughters: Judit, Zsuzsi, and Kati.

She was in Israel and the U.S., but it is not clear, which sisters or daughters she visited. She also visited Auschwitz. She met a fellow survivor in the U.S., Anna Soltész, whose Auschwitz tattoo number was close to hers.

She kept kosher until 1957, but after that, there was no kosher butcher in Hajduszoboszló.

In 1957, she went back to Beregszász to see her sisters who, in the following years regularly visited her in Hungary.

After the war, she encountered some anti-Semitism in Hungary and always stood up to it.