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October 10, 2018, Budapest, Hungary

Summary

Ibolya Szabó Vince was born on August 20, 1926 in Budapest, Hungary. Her father, József Szabó (1882) was a tailor and had his own small workshop in 26 Nagydíófa St. Her mother was a seamstress as well, but in the late 1930's she obtained a license to sell milk and milk products in a market hall. She said that her parents worked a lot, but that they were never really well off. They were religious. They kept a kosher household, celebrated Friday nights, but had to work on Saturdays.

She was an only child. She attended elementary school in Kazinczy St, and Czukor St, and then middle school for girls in Dohány St. When she finished her schooling in 1940/41, antisemitism was appreciable. She found a workshop in the inner city of Budapest, on Vörösmarty Sq., which accepted her as an apprentice for women's custom tailoring. She formed friendships there with three girls that lasted a lifetime: Zsuzsi Pap, Rózsi Kohn, and Márta Spiller. (They all survived the Holocaust.)

After 1942, her father had to rent his workshop to a Christian to be able to continue working. He also had health problems. Her mother lost her license in the market, and life became very hard for them.

After the German occupation [March 19, 1944], they had to wear the Yellow Star. Her father had sewn very nice Yellow Stars for himself. Mrs. Vince kept one, which she showed at the end of the interview.

In the summer of 1944, her family had to move to a Yellow Star house in 13 Wesselényi St. Her grandmother, aged 84 was with them, too. The building was next to the Jewish Soup Kitchen (*Népkonyha*) where they received food. They could leave the house between 11:00am and 5:00pm. She and her father kept working.

Her father managed to get one Swedish *Schutzpass* with the names of the three of them. They had to move to a Swedish protected house, in a different part of town, on Hollán St. This happened after Szálasi came to power on October 15, 1944. She remembered how happy they were on October 15 when they thought that the war was over.

One day in late October, she, and all Jewish women, aged 16-40 had to report to the sports field, KISOK, with provisions for three days. The Arrow Cross forced the majority of women gathered on the KISOK field to march toward the western border. She was very lucky in being among those who were sent home. One of her cousins ended up in Dachau from the KISOK field.

On November 13, Arrow Cross men came to their building and ordered everyone to the courtyard. Her father carried all the money the family had in his pockets. After a while, they were allowed to go back into their apartments. On November 14, her father, who felt insecure having their names on the same *Schutzpass*, set out with the intention of trying to obtain separate *Schutzpasses*. He still had all the money and some jewelry. He never returned. He was rounded up somewhere in the neighborhood. She and her mother received a postcard from him informing them that he was in the western Hungarian town of Győr, and that he was going further west. She never managed to find out what happened to him. It was likely that he fell

victim to one of the mass shootings in the area of the border town Hegyeshalom. She had a [memorial] stumbling block laid for him in Nagydíófa St.

Around the end of November, Arrow Cross men ordered them out of the protected house. She and her mother were separated, because they fell into different age groups. She and the younger women spent a night in a building on Teleki Sq. where they were subjected to body searches. Her mother also arrived there the same night. The next morning they were marched to the brick factory [of Budakalász?] where they spent most of the day, just to be marched back to the city, to the ghetto. They were back in 13 Wesselényi St. She and her mother volunteered in the Jewish Soup Kitchen.

From the end of December 1944 until January 18, 1945, during the siege of Budapest, they were in the very crowded basement of the building, in the air-raid shelter. Occasionally, they had a little food.

On January 18, 1945, the Soviet troops liberated Pest.

She and her mother went back to their apartment in Nagydíófa St. Her father's workshop was still there, with some equipment missing. They had barely any furniture, household items, and they were hungry all the time. Her mother decided to go to the countryside where they had distant relatives in a small town, Berettyóujfalu, and in a village, Hencida. They traveled partly by trains, partly on foot for about ten days. They spent several weeks in Hencida where, finally, they had enough to eat.

The provisional government was already functioning in Debrecen. From newspapers issued there, they read about Auschwitz, the gas chambers, and other forced labor camps.

On May 1, they returned to Budapest.

She went back to her old workplace.

She married soon after. Her husband, László Vince was a jeweler by trade. In 1943-45, he was in forced labor in Transylvania, in Carpatho-Ruthenia, and in the western border area of Hungary.