

## George (György) Pick



### Born March 28, 1934, Budapest, Hungary

György was born March 28, 1934 in Budapest, Hungary. He was the only child of middle class Jewish parents. György's father, Istvan, was an engineer responsible for producing hydraulic grape presses for wineries. His mother, Margit, worked as a legal secretary. The Pick family could trace its history in the Austro-Hungarian Empire back 230 years, and György had many close relatives in the city.

In the 1930s, Hungary's authoritarian government pushed the country into close alignment with Nazi Germany. Hitler's speeches were broadcast on the radio and, even though György could not understand German, he was disturbed by the anger he heard in the dictator's voice. Hungary's anti-Jewish laws were passed between 1938 and 1941. Modeled after Germany's Nuremberg Laws they defined Jews in racial terms, excluded Jews from various professions, and severely restricted their participation in economic life. As a result, György's parents lost their jobs.

In 1940, Hungary officially allied itself with the Axis powers. György's father was conscripted into a labor battalion and sent to the newly annexed territory of Ruthenia, where he was forced to build roads for the military. He was released after three months, but was re-conscripted in 1943, and again in 1944. György attended school until March, 1944, when [Type a quote from the document or the summary of an interesting point. You can position the text box anywhere in the document. Use the Text Box Tools tab to change the formatting of the pull quote text box.]

German troops occupied Hungary.

In mid-May 1944, the Hungarian authorities, in coordination with the German Security Police, began to systematically deport the Hungarian Jews. In less than two months, nearly 440,000 Jews were deported from Hungary. Most were deported to Auschwitz, but thousands were also sent to the border with Austria to be deployed at digging fortification trenches. By the end of July 1944, the only Jewish community left in Hungary was that of Budapest, the capital.

In June, the Picks, along with other Jews in the capital, had to move into special buildings marked with yellow stars, and all of their belongings were confiscated. That October, the

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Hungarian fascists, known as the Arrow Cross Party, took power, and began to deport the remaining Jews to various concentration camps. György's father was able to save the family from deportation by hiding them in a vacant building disguised as a uniform factory. A month later, they, along with the 160 to 170 Jews hiding there were discovered. György was placed in a Red Cross orphanage with 500 other children, but he soon escaped and returned to his family. He later learned that the children who had remained in the orphanage were killed. Two weeks after this incident, the Picks were sent to the Ghetto in Budapest. György and his family remained there during the final siege of the city which lasted from December through January.

In January, 1945, the Ghetto was liberated by Soviet troops. Approximately, 130 of György's relatives had been killed at Auschwitz-Birkenau. After the war, György remained in Hungary, where he earned a degree in engineering. In 1956, he came to the United States as a refugee. He earned his Ph.D. in 1965, and then worked for the United States Navy as an aerospace engineer until his retirement in 1995. He and his wife, Leticia Flores Pick, live in Arlington, Virginia.

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