

György Fenyő, born 1936 in Budapest, Hungary, interviewed in his home in Nacka, Sweden, talking about growing up as the only child; living with his parents and paternal grandmother in an apartment in Budapest; his father losing his job in a factory when the authorities requisitioned it from the Jewish owner; his parents getting him and themselves baptized in 1939, in an effort to avoid persecution; his father being requisitioned for forced labor three times; his father being sent to the Russian front the third time; getting a letter about the "disappearance" of the father in January 1943; having to move from their apartment and not going to school after the German invasion 1944; moving several times, between "Jewish houses" and to the ghetto; hiding in a basement with dysentery during the Soviet siege of Budapest; his mother giving blood to obtain rice to cure her son's illness; his mother providing protection for the family by working as an unpaid cleaner for the Arrow Cross-regime at the Radetsky barracks; Arrow Cross-soldiers picking up him, his mother and grandmother, sending them to a farm and a police station; his grandmother being sent to a concentration camp, where she died, but his mother saving him by bringing him to work at the barracks; having very few memories of the occupation and siege of Budapest, just remembering images, like a wagon full of corpses; being sent to the countryside after the war, first on a program by the Budapest Mayor, living with a half-Roma family, and then on a program by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee; going to a Zionist camp in Ansbach, Germany, in 1946 and waiting for a passage to Palestine; his mother working at the US army base in Ansbach; his mother returning to Hungary and marrying his stepfather Gabriel Gabor; leaving the Zionist camp and joining his mother in Budapest; getting straight As in school but not being allowed to study at the university because he was Jewish; working in a music record factory; leaving Hungary in 1956; getting a warm welcome and an opportunity to study medicine in Sweden; his mother never leaving Hungary where she worked as a concert impresario; working as a psychiatrist; going to Cambodia, Kenya and Pakistan on Red Cross-missions, to give back; his daughter Elisabeth Asbrink writing about his life in the novel 1947; having a biological, linguistic, musical and culinary Hungarian identity, a Swedish professional identity and a historic and communal Jewish identity; the causes of antisemitism being religious antisemitism, a genetically predisposed fear of everything different and an envy of Jews who did not drink, saved money and prioritized their children's education; the lesson of the Holocaust being that all means are justified, including using nuclear weapons, when it comes to defend Jews from falling victims of another Holocaust, not counting on the intervention of non-Jews or other states; "never forget" is not enough, it being necessary to counter antisemitism actively; still dreaming that his father is coming back and suffering from never knowing exactly how he died.