

Tiszafüredi Füzetek 5.

Tiszafüred Booklets No.5.

Orbánné dr.Szegö Ágnes  
Mrs. Orbán, Ágnes Szegö PhD

To the memory of the Jews of Tiszafüred and  
surrounding district

(Tiszafüred és vidéke zsidóságának emlékezete)

Translated by Agi Casey  
Sydney Australia

Printed in Tiszafüred, BlonDekor Printery 2004  
ISSN 1588-1709

Translator's note:

I would like to dedicate my translation to the memory of my husband's aunt, Mrs. Juliska Deutsch, née Elefánt, her husband Zoltán, their four beautiful little children, György, Vera, Kató and Éva, from Tiszaörs.

Also to my husband's parents and the 36 members of his family, out of 41, who perished in the Holocaust, without trace, most of them in the gaschambers of Auschwitz.

Their memory, the memory of many hundred thousands Hungarian Jews, perished in the Holocaust, should live forever.

I tried to translate this booklet word by word, to render it how Mrs. Szegö wanted to show the history of the Tiszafüred Jews. Some explanation was needed for readers whose background is not Hungarian.

Our son, John, edited my work to be a more precise English, for which I am truly thankful.

## Jewish settlements on the Great Hungarian Plains (Alföld)

In Hungary, or rather in Pannonia as it was then known, there are indications of a Jewish presence from the time of the Roman Empire. After the great migrations of the 800's, after the conquest of the land of Hungary by the Magyars in 896AD, coexistence started between the Hungarian tribes and the Jews. Later, during the Middle Ages, in the time of Turkish occupation, the Jews organized business between East and West. In County Heves we have evidence about the Jews from the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. After the Turkish occupation ended at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the population of the Great Hungarian Plains increased throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and during that period Jews started to settle there in greater numbers.

During the Middle Ages their dwellings, occupations and clothing were determined by strict regulations. Their occupation was mostly commerce, money lending and leasing land. They had no civil rights until the Compromise in 1867 with the Austrian Emperor; their religion was not recognised until the end of the 19th Century. Queen Maria Theresa in 1746 issued a tolerance tax which had to be paid for a hundred years. The free cities by royal decree did not let Jews settle inside their walls. Many counties like Jászság, Kiskunság, NagyKunság, Hajduság, did not give them permission to settle until 1850, citing the county's privileged status.

Commerce on the Great Hungarian Plains (Alföld) was controlled in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by the Greek merchants from the Balkans. The Jews were still living there without rights, so they did not have to pay taxes, hence they could sell their goods cheaper; selling the same merchandise as the Greeks, such as scrap iron, raw-hide, brandy, and fleece. Where landlords were willing to accommodate them, they established themselves in larger numbers around the places forbidden to them, in smaller settlements like Nádudvar, Dévaványa Tiszaigar, Tiszabö, Tiszafüred.

Some of the first communities started with the landowner, who in his own best interest gave permission for a number of Jewish families to settle. From the last third of the 18th century Hungarian agriculture needed a mobile group of people, particularly in

commerce, who would be able to grant credit to a homestead that wanted to switch over to market produce. These Jewish merchants underwrote the purchasing procedures, so with their credit, they encouraged the development of the production of rural commodities. The Napoleonic war brought agricultural prosperity and that accelerated this process.

For the Jews, the concentration in settlements was necessary for a feeling of security and for their religious customs; they had to maintain a religious organisation, employ a rabbi, a cantor, a kosher slaughterer, and to pray in their accustomed manner they required a minimum number of coreligionist. However, even with all that, the primary consideration was the economic situation. When the prohibition on settlement ceased, the people moved to larger settlements, only one or two Jewish families stayed in the small villages.

On week days the Jews sold their goods in the markets of larger cities, where they spent the nights in rented houses or inn on the outskirts of town. At market time they had permission to stay 2-3 days before or after events. The peddler had to travel a long distance in his one-horse cart from Tiszaigar, Tiszafüred, Dévaványa, Tiszabö, Földes, and even from distant places like Kenderes, Tisza-Abád, or Nádudvar, so it was in their own interest to stay in the vicinity of the market. Around evening they left the village for their night's accommodations, but in the morning went back to the market to continue their activities. On Friday night though, they returned to their home, to celebrate the Saturday festivities in the family circle.

In the 1727 census in the five villages of both county Heves and Külső- Szolnok we find only six Jewish families, four worked farms, and two leased inns. In the 1788 census, during the reign of Joseph II. in the two counties we find five villages with Jewish families. In Tiszafüred four were lease holders, in Kenderes two, in Alattya, Tiszaszabö and Tiszaigar one each. The Jews, who lived on an estate, were mostly leasing the inn, and later they leased the butchery.

The inn was a significant place in the villagers' life, an informal

centre, there they not only sold the landlord's wine, but also brandy which was legally or illegally produced. Next to the inn there was usually a general store and the courtyard and farm buildings served as storage space for the fodder. The duty of the innkeeper also included money lending and to settle credit transactions. A capable lessee of an inn was over the years also able to lease a farm and with that, it was possible to move up in their economic and social status.

The church district of Eger published bulletins from 1816. From this bulletin we learn that in Heves and Külsö-Szolnok counties, there were 1,592 Jewish inhabitants in 1816; 6,879 in 1851; 11,533 in 1869; so from 1816 till 1869 their numbers grew by 724%. In 1816 they lived in 46 different villages, in 1851 in 145 villages, and in 1869 in 166 villages. Their concentration increased in larger numbers in the larger settlements.

### Jewish settlements in Tiszafüred

In the local Jewish cemetery, the oldest headstones are the baroque stones inscribed in Yiddish from 1770. In 1788 there were four families: Salamon Moyzes, Borgen Calevy Manosses, Clamon Gasparus and Lörincz Jacobus. They were all tenants, i.e. did not own a home, and their occupation was: leasing (probably land or inn). In Tiszaigar where Salamon Jacobus was living, his occupation was leasing, and he had one son and three daughters. Traditional belief is that the first religious community was in Tiszaigar. The Jewish families in larger numbers moved to Tiszafüred only after 1790. Tiszaigar was the first centre of Jewish life: it had a congregation, synagogue, ritual-baths and rabbi. The rabbi was Menachem Bleier, who was a famous Talmud scholar, and wrote a book Kovod Halvonon. Yet, according to the census, by 1816, 104 Jews were residing in Tiszafüred while in Tiszigar there were a mere 37.

The Jewish population in Tiszafüred continuously increased in the 19th century. The 1827/28 census revealed 186 Jews. A total of 21 household were identified, and 40 of the Jews were between the ages of 16-60. They all lived on the estates of Pankotay, Gyulay, and Farkas. By trade they were 10 merchants, 4 tradesmen. They were

mostly poor. In that century population movements become larger, not only did Jews come to Tiszafüred, but also they left to go to different places. That was characteristic for that time. The 1839/40 census revealed 33 households: 30 spouses, 46 boys, 46 girls, 9 Jewish servants and one relative; altogether 164 Jewish persons. Occupations: 2 wholesale merchants, 1 businessman, 13 peddlers, 6 tradesmen, 6 tenant farmers, 3 beggars, 2 others. The richest merchant was Gáspár Ernst. The social difference within the Jewish community, the pecuniary differences gradually increased. The majority was poor, but already the more competent started to increase their social status.

The poor hawkers were the lowest in the social ladder. They wandered the countryside continuously, with whistles in their mouth, bundles on their back. They sold sewing needles, cottons to the people in the villages, and collected rug, skin, honey, feather. Hawking was the traditional form of commerce around Europe that bridged the gap between countryside and city. The peddler had to think about the commodity requirements of the city and had to develop a certain economic rationalism. Peddling was mostly a Jewish occupation in Europe, and it gave them a way to fit into the economic system.

On the next stage of hierarchy were the traders with their horse drawn wagon (*questores circumforei*) who bought, sold and carted in larger quantities. The merchants, (*mercator*) with shops were entitled to trade in all sort off goods. The country “*mercator*” and “*questor*” were often commission merchant for the wholesalers from Vienna, Budapest Győr, Pozsony, till they themselves grew richer, and were eligible for the higher tax brackets of the wholesaler, and graduated to a higher ranks of the social ladder.

For the first time in 1827 Jewish vendors were identified in the two provinces mentioned earlier. At the weekly or daily market place, the ordinary stall keeper paid 15 “*krajcár*” (penny), but anyone who had a larger stand had to pay 30 *krajcár*. In 1828 the ordinary stall keeper and the common potter without a cart had to pay the same rates. At that time the market for earthenware and other ceramics belonged to the potter and the shopkeeper. Among them there were Jews too.

The synagogue in Tiszafüred was mentioned first by Elek Fényes. In the 1847/48 census it was on the estate of the Nánássy. To the congregation belonged a house of prayer, a rectory, and a house for a kosher butchery.

In Tisza county Imre Palugyai in 1850/51 registered 1371 Jewish inhabitants. Most of them lived in Tiszabö 424, Tiszafüred 341, Tiszaigar 121, Tizzaszentimre 105. The first sudden increase in the numbers of Jews in Tiszafüred was between 1844 and 1851. Their number increased from 181 to 315, and further in 1854, to 500. After that it was a decrease but later an increase and in 1869 when the Jewish population was 600.

When the prohibition to live in the district was lifted, a number of families moved to the Nagy-kunság county. The first Jewish resident in Karcag was Abraham Ernst who was born in Tiszafüred in 1815. He was probably the son of Gáspár Ernst. In 1853 he gained his permanent residency.

## The Jews from Tiszafüred in the war of liberation (1848)

The Jewish population did not have any civil rights but they still took part in the war of liberation. They threw themselves into the battle, they were transporting the army and provided provisions. Fifty years later Mór Jókai (one of Hungary's greatest writer) recalled "when all of the different races in our country, with whom the Hungarians shared their freedom, whose sons were emancipated from their bonds, and made them their own master, had arms lifted against them, then the Hebrew race sacrificed their blood, their wealth, their mental ability for the Hungarian nation and for the protection of the constitutional freedom".

On 29 May 1848 boys were conscripted into the national home guard in Tiszafüred. They were between 14 and 16 years old. On the list there were 162 names, among them 14 Jews. In the archives of the Pál Kiss museum in Tiszafüred only four lists of names survived. In terms of the Jewish population, the one which has 23 Jewish names out of 150 is the most notable. In the third group Jakab Blau was mentioned, in the eighth group corporal Soma Groszmann, and in

this group most of them were Jewish. Lipot Schönfeld, the surgeon who was born in 1811, and who finished his medical studies in 1834 at the Budapest university, participated in the battles in the south. Éliás Blau was only 19 years old when he participated in the revolution, and after the defeat he was conscripted into the Austro-Hungarian army as part of his punishment.

Tiszafüred was an important place in the 1849 events, as the army started the celebrated spring offensive from there. The shops and inns prospered while the troops were stationed there. It hardly needs other proof than the large figure of many the obligatory delivery after the collapse of the war of Independence of 1848. In the local field hospital two wounded Jewish boys died between 15 - 17 April, Jozsef Grün was 22 year old, born in Pozsony, and Lőrinc Róth who was one year older and was born in Máramaros.

The benefit that they gained during the war of Independence and the earlier wealth what they had, was greatly reduced by the harsh levies, the delivery of their produce, which Haynau (the Austrian prime minister) imposed on the Hungarian Jewry. For punishment, he imposed a penalty of 2,300.000 forint booty, which in part the Jewish people of Tiszafüred had to pay. In 1929 the archive of the congregation of Tiszabö still stored a receipt from 1500 silver forint paid for ransom.

## Religious worship in the first hundred years

The “Chevra Kadisa” - funeral association - was established in 1803 in Tiszafüred. The first synagogue was built in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in classic style on the main street, close to the Roman Catholic church. The first rabbi was Mozes Schönfeld, the son of Jakab Schönfeld the rabbi of Szikszó. He was born 1791 in Szikszó and died 1867 in Simand. He was the rabbi in Tiszafüred for 30 years. In 1848 he moved to Sarkad and later to Simand.

The next rabbi was Herman Rosenberg (Reb Jiszroel Jajne Cvi) born 1802 at Obuda (other name: Altófen). He also established a Jewish school, a Jeshiva (school for Talmud scholars) which functioned until 1944. It attracted students from far and wide. His

son Sámuel, who was a well known rabbi and worked in Hunfalva, established a Yeshiva there.

Nathan Jungreis was Herman Rosenberg's successor. He was born in Nagymárton 1833. His father Antal Jungreis was the rabbi at Csenger. Nathan was brought up in Csenger, where he studied under his father who was known in the whole country as an outstanding scholar. His unrivalled knowledge made him famous in the country and abroad as well. He was the chief rabbi in Nagy-Szölös and in Fehér-Gyarmat. Twenty-one years earlier the congregation had invited him to fill this empty rabbinical chair, and he fulfilled that position until his death. He held that post conscientiously, with the greatest devotion and tact. He wrote two Hebrew books "Torász Mose Noszon" and "Menuchász Mose" which were published in Munkács. He died on 23 September 1889, his funeral was attended by 600-700 mourners among them several chief rabbis, from Biharnagybajom, Csenger, Mezöcsát, Marosvásárhely. He had two sons, one was a rabbi in Eger and the other in Nádudvar.

In 1869 when the nationwide participation and modernisation was the agenda, a nationwide congress divided the Jewish population in the country. On the congress three directions took shape. The traditionalist, mostly on the smaller settlements, chose the orthodox way. Tiszafüred became an orthodox congregation and always emphasised that independent status.

## The Emancipation

The emancipation in Europe started at the end of the 18th century to achieve the equality of civil rights for Jewish people. But after the precedents of the 1867 reform era and the not published proclamations in 1849, only the "Historical Compromise", which created the Austro-Hungarian Empire, brought the solution. In the 1867: XVII Act declared: "The Jewish population in the country has the same civil and political rights as the Christian inhabitants. All terms of the law which is contradictory herewith rescinded."

The Compromise and the emancipation created with its law

and order the atmosphere for the social promotion of Jews and the acceleration of their assimilation. In the modernisation, after 1867, the Jewish population played an important role in the Hungarian economy. The businessmen and the lessees who had previously accumulated assets provided the monetary basis for the development of modern capitalism. The Jews created manufacturing companies, modernized rural estates, and created banking establishments, using their centuries old experience in commerce to ensure the agility of their enterprises.

## The Emancipation and assimilation of the Tiszafüred Jews

In 1851 Mr. Palugyai noted that the mother tongue of all Jewish resident in the district was Jewish (he probably meant Yiddish) and not Hungarian. For thousand of years the Jews put special stress on education there was hardly any one, who could not read the Holy Scripture. Knowledge had religious respect, ignorance was shame. This mentality had his result that after the emancipation the Jews flocked towards intellectual occupations in great numbers and to do this they had to adopt Hungarian as their spoken language. To adapt oneself, to change one's own language must have brought many difficulties, but the educational skill was of capital importance.

The religious education for the children in Tiszafüred in 1803 started with the Talmud Tora, and the Yeshiva started in 1865. The formal teaching in standard, more secular, subjects started in 1877 in an official recognised Jewish primary school, in a rented building, with three teachers in three classes. The principal teacher Gerzson Cserhát who had his education in a teachers training college, had several years of experience. This was the time of the introduction of the Hungarian language. The subjects that were examined in the third class were: Hungarian writing, reading, grammar, Hungarian history, geography, natural history arithmetic. The school furnishing consisted of a few blackboards, maps of Hungary, some writing desks and bench. In 1889 the school already had its own building.

The Board of Supervisors of the school, whose members were

most respected persons in the congregation, looked after the educational affairs. They regularly assisted the poor students, with free text books, writing materials, and in winter presented them with warm clothing, and shoes. At the end of the year examination the diligent students were rewarded with books. From the turn of the century till the thirties Jozsef Löwinger was the principal. He was teaching in the upper forms, Cecilia Czobel and later Boriska Shwarcz were teaching in the lower classes.

In Tiszafüred the opening of the higher elementary school dragged on for a long time. It started only in 1913, and among its pupils we find a number of Jewish children. In 1914/15 school year among the 28 boys in first year 6 are Jews, among the 45 boys in second year 18 are Jewish.

To adapt oneself was not without conflicts. We know the gratitude for accommodation, and the desire to fit from some of the newspapers of that period. After the death of Náthán Jungreis, on 6th of October in 1891 Mor Szófer arrived to Tiszafüred though his first sermon was in German, but in spirit it was in devotion to one's country. Many times later he emphasised his patriotism. No better example exists than his festive address in autumn 1893. He said "In this country in front of the law anybody is equal, no matter what religion the individual posses. Look around our continent, and we can see our poor Russian co-religionists how they are exposed to torture! Not much better is the situation for our co-religionist in Romania. It this land nobody is harassed because their religious belief. So we should pray for the happiness of the country"

## The economic progress; the landowners

Even in time of the Absolutism, between 1849 and 1867, when Hungary was governed directly by Austria, there were favourable provisions towards the Jews. In 1860 they lifted the prohibition for the acquisition of land and lifted certain prohibitions on vocations. The capital which the Jews accumulated now was able to flow into the agricultural sphere which suffered from lack of assets. That opportunity was there for everybody. To purchase a land was a sure way to social improvement At the top of the social scale in long

established rural society were the land owners. They invested capital and employed a qualified manager of the agricultural estate to ensure a high income yield.

Jakab Blau was a peddler when he married in 1849; in 1880 he was the wealthiest, most respected Jewish citizen, and he was the president of the congregation. In 1883 he was a member of the county council and as one of highest tax payers in the county. He died in 1890 and left to his heirs and inheritance of 1124 “hold”(1 hold is 1.42 acre).

Jakab Gáspár, the son of Ernst Gáspár, had 674 “hold” in 1893; Herman Leuchter (who started as a peddler in the 50’s, and had lived in many places) had 459 “hold”; Dr. Ignác Menczer who was a doctor, had 224 “hold”; and the Léderer brothers, who lived in Tiszakürt run a farm of 2721 “hold” on the borderland of Tiszfüred.

The most respected Jewish citizen and who were in the highest tax scale had a place in the town and county council. In 1883 Jakab Blau, Jakab Klein, Dr. Ignác Menczer, Lajos Rosinger and Peter Ernst were members. In 1910 in the district among the highest tax payer were Gyula Léderer 5th; Sándor Klein 11th; Zsigmond Klein 12th from Tiszaörs; Ignác Flam 21st; Dr Henrik Soltész lawyer 23rd; Lipot Wildman, lessee from Tiszaszölös,28th.

The wealthiest families were the businessmen, who put their accumulated assets in land. In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century one after the other moved away from Füred. Lajos Rosinger, a lessee of large agricultural property, moved between 1910-20 to Debrecen where he became the president of the congregation. The wife of Soma Czeizler in 1929 was a manager of a model agricultural estate in Eger. The descendants of the Ernst family –doctors and lawyers– were coming to visit for many celebrations from Miskolc or Debrecen.

## The participation of the Jewish citizens in the local industry, commerce, hospitality trade and credit operations

In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries we find a number of Jews among the tradesmen in the district. In the 1827/28 census four tradesmen were named, without mentioning their particular trades. In the first roll in the registry office we find a Jewish textile painter and a dressmaker. In Tiszafüred it was a time honoured trade to be a saddler and we have a 12 record from the 19<sup>th</sup> century that one of them was a Jew, and so was Adolf Némethy (formerly known as Deutsch). In the 1877 census 14 Jewish tradesman appear and seven shopkeeper. When in 1891 an industrial corporation took shape, the Jews filled important positions.

Tailor/dressmaker was typical Jewish occupation and in different sources we can find their names. The first in the register of deaths was the well known French couturier Izrael Stern, born in Miskolc, and died on the 3 of July 1851 at age 42. Mor Schwarcz a local, who visited Wien, Berlin and Paris and had his shop - for ladies and gents - from 1893 till 1944, when he was deported. Samuel Funk and Jenö Frank, they were brothers, one a turner the other one a cobbler. They were from Késmark and married girls from Tiszafüred at the end of the last century. Though Samuel went to the USA at the beginning of this century, he returned, but then soon moved away. Jenö on the other hand was working here even after the First World War. Alajos Spitzer was a locksmith and ran a well outfitted workshop. Between the two world war the two Fisher brothers, Henrik and Lászlo were working here as joiners. Their up to date electrically driven workshop was in Fő (Main)-street in their own house, next to the synagogue.

At the end of the last century Henrik (Chajem) Herskovich, who was blacksmith, married a local girl and moved here from Máramaros,. That was not a typical Jewish occupation. He had eight children and died in Auschwitz at the age of 81. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century a number of watchmakers were working in the city. Miksa Weiszmann, the son of David, was one who was working in the trade from 1874, and at the beginning of the century he had a tobacco shop as well. His son Ignác opened his high-class

watchmaker and jeweller business in 1904 and it functioned until 1944 when he was deported.

Sámuel Löw was a good example of economic mobility. In the 1870s he worked as a tinsmith, and also had a soda-water plant, and then in 1888 established the first printing house in Tiszafüred. In 1893 he moved to Eger where he bought a bigger printing house and eventually become the publisher of the newspaper called “Eger” In the 1930s, his son Béla became the director of the Bank of Eger. The printing house was managed by the Kohn family, and after they moved somewhere else the Goldsteins took over the management. They published the newspaper in Tiszafüred too and all those papers were of high quality. Beside the publishing house they had a stationary and book shop and a tomb stone manufacturing business. Some of their work could be seen even today around the graveyards of Tiszafüred.

The capital which Jews first accumulated in commerce later appear in industrial investments. Ignác Flamm moved from Egyek to Tiszafüred in the 1880s. Beside buying lands, he built the first steam mill, and eventually in 1912 he established a brick yard . Adjacent to his steam mill he built a steam bath. In 1906 he established a bank for the Tisza district and held the directorship till his death in 1930. A few times he was voted in to be the president of the congregation.

Zsigmond, the son of Jakab Blau left the farm in 1893. His sons Albert and Lajos established “Brush and Whitewash Pty Ltd” in Tiszafüred. For this industry they build a whole industrial complex: steam-mill, factory, storeroom and in 1910 an electrically driven plant. In the 1900 they employed 100 workers that was the largest industrial undertaking in Tiszafüred. Their manufactured products were even exported.

About this time we know about a number of ventures which the Christian and Jewish landlords established together. In 1891 under the name of “Wood Depot and Steam-Mill Pty Ltd” the landowner on the side of the Tisza river, established a joint company for lumber products and processing industry. The members were Lajos Csávolszky member of Parliament, Jenö Graefl big landowner from Poroszlo, Vilmos Ernst, Jakab Epstein and Ignác

Flamm those three Jews from Tiszafüred.

The three Klein brothers, Sándor, Artur, Zsigmond were land lessees from Tiszaörs, but at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century they turned to industrial undertaking with more or less success. Zsigmond moved to Tiszafüred, where he stayed here for 16 years, and for some of these years he was even the president of the congregation. In 1893 he opened a lumber yard beside the railway station. In 1909 he established for his steam-mill, steam-saw and button factory the “Heves County Manufacturing Industry Pty Ltd” with Poroszlo as a centre. The upwardly mobile Jews considered themselves part of the local gentry and they adapted their habits to this status. In 1909 the newspaper in Tiszafüred gives us information about the hunting parties of Sándor Klein, the land owner from Tiszaörs.

Christian and Jewish nobilities (the landowners, businessman, industrialist, intellectuals) together founded in 1888 the first local credit establishment: “The Tiszafüred Saving Bank Pty Ltd” Among the founding member we find Lajos Csávolszky, the representative of Tiszafüred in the parliament. The Jewish members included Lajos Rosinger, Ignác Flam (occupations listed as directors), Miksa Strausz (lessee), Bertalan Blau (the son of Jakab Blau), dr. Ignác Menczer (doctor), and Ábrahám Brieger (businessman). At the foundation of the bank, of the ninety people who subscribed shares, one third of them were Jewish. The leading Jewish citizens were always among the board of directors, as were large numbers of the shareholders. Their economic situation it was of vital importance the function of the local bank.

The bank for the Tisza area was established in 1906. They ran the local brick yard and in 1912 turned it into a proprietary limited entity under the name of “Tiszafüred Brick and Tile Pty Ltd”. The initial invested capital was 60.000 crowns. The president of the Proprietary Limited was Adolf Rubinstein. In 1917 the same people were the directors of the Proprietary Limited and the bank.

In the district register, which was prepared in 1877, it is remarkable the large proportion of Jewish tradesman and businessmen. In Nagyiván they were five: two shopkeepers, one

peddler, and two innkeepers, in Poroszló they were eight: one butcher, two tailors, one timber merchant and four shopkeepers. In Tiszaabád there were fifteen: two timber merchants nine shopkeepers, three innkeepers and the richest among them Ábrahám Kohn lessee; in Tizzaszalók they were fifteen as well: two rope manufacturers, one butcher, one glazier, one tailor, one cobbler, one tenant farmer, and four shopkeepers.

At the outskirts of Tizzaszölös lived most of the registered Jewish shopkeepers and tradesmen: 20 of them, and among those were one blacksmith, 1 butcher, 1 wine merchant, 4 general store owners, 2 general dealers, 2 innkeepers and 9 peddlers. Even the well-to-do paid only a small amount of taxes, the other ones were too poor for that. Tizsanána registered 1 general store dealer and 6 shopkeepers. The wealthiest shopkeeper was Adolf Grünbaum. In Tiszaörs lived six families: three shopkeepers one, general store dealer and two peddlers.

In the commercial life of Tiszafüred the Jewish shopkeepers had a leading role. Those families were very important they were the "dynasties" of commerce: the Weiszmann, Schwartz, Breuer, Brieger and the Rubinstein family with their poorer and wealthier branches.

A documentary film was made in 1994, in which the interviewees emphasised the superb commercial attitude of the businessmen, handed down from generation to generation. On the main road were the wholesalers and the larger shops, while the side streets were virtually overflowing with small general stores, where it was possible to buy on credit. The elderly even today recall the memory of the Jewish shopkeepers and tradesmen.

Dezső Sajtos bookbinder: "In Tiszafüred the market lasted for a week, the passing traffic was constant, the people needed the commercial activities too. And the shopkeepers bought everything, so everything could be found in Tiszafüred and there was no need to go to Budapest. The shops were well placed and one did not have to go far from one street to the other. The peasants often had no money, so they went into the shops and said to the Jewish owner, "I am sorry I don't have money, but I will bring it when I have it." So the shopkeeper took out his notebook and wrote in the creditor's

name. When the creditor bought eggs or flower, the shopkeeper never reproached them for not bringing the money. The shopkeepers accepted those on the current value, so they both were content to give what was due. Even the poorest people liked the Jews because they went to length to make them happy without any conditions, and they gave them the opportunity to get along in life”.

We have knowledge about several firewood and timber yard merchants from the 1931 directory and recollections. Gyula Glück and his family moved from Zenta to Tiszafüred, and he had his shop in the centre of the town, beside the Weiszman shop. The Ernő Weiner timber yard had stock in 1944 which was worth 59,276.61 pengö. (Hungarian currency).

One of the oldest and wealthiest family in Tiszafüred, were the Weizmanns, who had their large general shop in the middle of the town, which was under their management through generations. Zakarias Weiszman came to Tiszafüred from Eger in 1844. His son David established the shop and they had all sorts of merchandise. Then David's son Jozsef, and his grandson David were in control until the nationalisation.

Salamon Rubinstein was born in Tarcál, where his father was the cantor. In the 1870s he wandered with two horse drawn carts and sold his merchandise this way. He wandered up to Gömör county, calling on the highland potters, while on the way he sold the pots from Tiszafüred. Coming back, he sold the pots and pans which he bought there. After the turn of the century, the three Rubinstein brothers moved here from Tiszaigar. Adolf in 1908 opened a general store and beer wholesaler business; Samuel opened a wholesale shop in 1904 for local and imported groceries; Herman had a china and glass wholesale business. Adolf closed his stores in 1923, and opened his distillery and wholesale business in 1931 on the street to Igar[?] where the discount cellar is today. After the landowners, they were the wealthiest Jewish citizen in Tiszafüred till 1944. And yet their children chose professional careers: Samuel's son became a doctor. Adolf's fortune in the thirties was estimated at two million pengö. In 1944 before they were hauled to the ghetto - according the inventory list -they spent a great amount of their accumulated money buying property in Budapest.

From the 18<sup>th</sup> century the hospitality trade became a traditionally Jewish occupation in Hungary. There are existing earlier documents about innkeepers in Tiszafüred, but at the turn of the century and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Jews were dominant among the innkeepers, the restaurateur, and the small or large hotel owners and managers.

The first hotel in Tiszafüred the “BIKA” was built in 1894. Jozsef Barna (Braun) leased this hotel first, then he bought it. He owned it with his family until 1929 when he died. The hotel consisted of 10 rooms, coffee shop, restaurant, the ballroom on the first floor was and the gentleman’s casino. In 1912 they created an other building, which is today the cinema. The hotel become the meeting place of the high society of Tiszafüred, the district ball was staged there too.

Ignác Pilitzer opened his inn in 1903 at the railway station, and he had some guest rooms there as well. David Czeizler had an inn in the middle of the town, which his daughter managed after he died. That inn was the meeting place of the coachmen and the servant girls. In the centre was the “Poldi” owned by Lörinc Rosenfeld.

At the Tiszafüred-Hortobágy highway they are several taverns functioning even today. The closest to Tiszafüred is “Patkós”(horseshoe) tavern which the Schwarcz family leased and bought later. They were a number of Schwarcz families around, so they all had some sort of nicknames: the tavern owner were the “Patkós Schwarcz,” but one can find “dull”, “pant-less”, “soapy”, “deaf”, “blockhead” Schwarcz. In the twenties, the Patkós Moric Schwarcz sold the tavern and bought a rest house the Balaton, which became an overnight rest place for the peasant small holders who traveled from the country to the city. They were traveling on horse drawn cart and these rest houses had parking for their rolling stock and the horses. Moric Schwarcz and his whole family were exterminated in the second world war.

Alongside the successful businesses, around the turn of the century the papers also wrote about bankruptcies and firms that were sold off, but the owners generally managed to lift themselves out of debt.

## The intelligentsia

There was a tendency for the Jews to move upward in the society. One way was buying lands, while another way was to educate their sons to become professionals. Jakab Epstein moved from Tizszaszentimre to Tiszafüred where he leased the ferry crossing concession before the permanent Tisza bridge was built. His sons born in 1883, lived here until their death: Géza was a pharmacist and Jenő, who lived here until 1941 became a lawyer.

The poor families exerted themselves to educate their children. Jakab Kohen came to Tiszafüred in 1909 as a peddler, then he became the ticket collector for the stalls in the weekly market. He had 12 children, four of the sons emigrated to France, escaping the life of poverty. Jenő became ambassador in the sixties, first in Switzerland, later in Romania. Josef after higher elementary school finished the Jewish teacher training college and was teaching in Földes and Debrecen. Later he was the principal there.

The first person who became a doctor, actually a surgeon, from Tiszafüred was Dr Lipot Schönfeld, who lived here until 1883. Dr. Ignác Menczer, who was born in Vizkelet - Pozsony county - moved here in 1852. At the outbreak of the Independence war, he attended the university in Budapest, for several months he was a member of the national guard, and was fighting the spring offensive under the leadership of Pál Vasvári. In 1872 to acknowledge his merits, the office of common properties gave him his service flat as a present. In 1902 to commemorate his fiftieth year in Tiszafüred to his astonishment he was presented with a large silver medal. He practised until he was 83 years old. On 25th of March 1905, at the bedside of one of his patient he started to feel ill and soon after that he died. He was buried at the same place as his son-in-law, at his estate in Domaháza. His son-in-law Dr. Soma Szigeti (Sámuel Sidlauer) was also a doctor. He came here from Eger in 1877. He had eight children. The Menczer - Szigeti family were totally assimilated, and integrated in the Hungarian Christian society.

From the 1880s more Jewish doctors had their practices here for shorter or longer period . Dr. Aladar Kiss came in the nineties to Tiszafüred , where he practiced as a district doctor till after the first

world war. During the war 18 in 1914 in the higher elementary school building a 40 bed army hospital was established and he was the commanding officer.

Dr István Aszodi, dentist, was born in Tiszaroff, where his father had a restaurant. He married the daughter of the Tiszafüred school principal in 1923 and practiced until his death in 1960. Dr. István Vadász a historian, practised dentistry. He was well known in the neighbourhood. I meet with people lately around South-Borsod, Bordosivánka, Négyes, Tiszavalk who regularly went to this famous dentist for treatment. He was the first in Tiszafüred who treated the people from the surrounding district and not only the people from the town.

Dr. Kálmán Szántó was born 1894 in Kunmadaras and went to high school at Karcag. He attended universities in Budapest, Vienna and Prague and served in the first world war for 35 months on the front-line. He was demobilised from the medical corps with several medals as a lieutenant and he had his career in the Jewish hospital in Budapest, but then settled in 1922 in Tiszafüred. He bought the first X-ray machine to Tiszafüred in the 1930s.

Dr. Jenő Nagy veterinarian born in Sirok as Jakab Groszmann, completed his university study in Budapest. He came to Tiszafüred in 1905 and from 1906 -1944 he was the only community public servant. He converted in 1942, and in that way he was stripped of his office only after the German occupation (19 March 1944), but in the end it did not save him from the deportation.

The first Jewish lawyers settled at Tiszafüred at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Dr. Henrik Soltész married Lajos Rosinger's younger sister and they lived here, but their children were educated in France. He worked together with Dr. Lajos Békefi for decades. A good example of the degree of assimilation of those two lawyers was that they were found guilty and sentenced to three days in prison in 1908 for the offence of dueling. They shot at each other, but it looks like the duel had no serious consequences.

Dr. Dezső Weinberger a lawyer from Sárospatak married Ignác Flamm's daughter, and they lived in Poroszlo and Tiszafüred, with

their family. His daughter Klára Weinberger remembers, “My father was a lawyer, and he enjoyed a good reputation. He was a talented musician who played the piano and the violin. At the women’s club performances he was the one on the piano. He composed a few pieces of music as well, they were published, by Rozsavölgyi (publisher of music in Hungary). I sang and played the piano very well. We lived a nice harmonious family life.”

In 1931 eight lawyers practised in Tiszafüred, half of those were Jewish.

From the local Jewish community in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and as well in the 20<sup>th</sup> a number of gifted boys emerged. Béla the son of Ignác Menczer became a transport engineer, who took part in the control works on the lower part of Danube, and in several railroad constructions. His son with the same name: Béla, lived for fifty years away from Hungary, teaching at various universities in western Europe, as a Catholic philosopher and the author of numerous books. Lipot Ungar was a shopkeeper whose youngest son Ödön, born in 1885, changed his name to Tisza along with his brother 1898. Later he worked in the USA in collaboration with Edison. His grandson László Tisza is MIT’s retired world famous physicist professor.

Zsigmond Szöllösi born 1872 at Tizaszölös, attended law at the university, but even then he leaned towards journalism. He with “Budapesti Hirlap” for fifteen years, then he worked at the “Ujság”. Between 1910-14 he was the editor of a comic journal the “Kakas Márton” He became famous as “Madár bácsi” (Uncle Bird). He was one of those men who shaped the characteristic Budapest sense of humor at the turn of the century.

Rozsa Brody born 1901 at Tiszafüred. Her father was a lessee, and she became a prominent chemical engineer and a research worker in the food industry. She wrote text books, and a number of her articles appeared in a scientific review. Ádám Zsigmond born 1906 at Patkos, his mother was from the Schwarcz family at Patkos, but he attended and finished his schooling in Tiszafüred. He studied at Szeged university and became a teacher at 1931. He was teaching in different places till 1942, when he was taken for forced labour in

the Ukraine. In the spring of 1945 he started to work with abandoned children, and established in Hungary the first village for them in Hajduhadháza. In 1957 at his initiative a children's village was established at Fot, and then he was the principal at the Soponya organisation. With his gift for teaching he created a program which complemented the teaching with practical training, according to the age of the children.

After the second world war, several of the young people who lost their families chose intellectual vocations. A number of them became university lecturers, high school teachers, doctors, architects, librarians. Today they are pensioners aboard or in our country. Dr Imre Lebovits, engineer and university lecturer, worked as the principal librarian at the university of engineering in Budapest until his retirement. His family already lived in Tiszafüred at 1827. Dr. Lebovits has actively worked to ensure that the Jewish cemetery in Tiszafüred has remained a dignified place.

## Religious life in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century

The presidents of the religious institutions and the people in the highest ranks of authority always came from the richest or most influential circle of the society. The honorary president of the Chevra Kadisa was always the rabbi, the head administrator was chosen each year from the highly respected members of the community. The congregation's budget estimate in 1894 was an income of 9224 Forint, and from that they spent 1774 Forint on the school. The rabbi, the cantor, the kosher slaughterer all lived in official quarters. The congregation maintained a school, a synagogue, a prayer house, a religious school, a ritual bathhouse, all of which had great importance in religious life.

The daughter of rabbi Mór Szófer, Jolan married rabbi Samuel Strasser. He worked as the deputy beside his father in law, and upon his father in law's death he took over the full responsibilities he was deported in 1944. He was very knowledgeable and he was an important, respected leader.

The synagogue was built in the last century but it was

auctioned in 1911. Immediately they began to build a new one and in addition to a security provided by the town, they obtained a loan of 40000 Korona. The building was finished on time. The plan was drawn by István Igári, and the builder was Márton Vágner. “The synagogue which was in secessionist style was without a doubt the most impressing building in Tiszafüred. For the large surfaces ornamental bricks were used. The entry door, which was on the main street, had a protruding secessionist front facade, the two sides had protruding ornamental brick stripes. From all those ornaments few remained and are only on the side of the building.”

The festive dedication was on 16 May 1916.

József Kuti, the retired school principal recollects the religious life between the two wars. ”We had a lovely synagogue. The late Sámuel Strasszer, the rabbi lived in the courtyard flat. There was even a small prayer house there “Bét Hámidrás” (the house of learning) where he gave religious services and “yeshiva” students, who came from all over the country, thought he was a remarkable man, a great scholar and generous. He donated a large part of his income to the poor. He had a standing in the whole parish, and he supervised the religious life of Tiszaigar, Tizzaszöllös, Tizzaszentimre, Egyek, Tiszacsege, Tiszaderzs, Poroszló.

Endre Várkonyi recollects: “There were some ultra religious people, who could be seen all the time going in the synagogue, coming out from the synagogue or in the synagogue. But the majority of the population went only on Friday evening or Saturday morning. My own grandfather, who was fairly religious, preferred to pray at home. I have the feeling that some of them went to synagogue only because at that time it was the right thing to do. It was in the society’s morals.”

## The social life

In Tiszafüred, the Jewish ladies association was established in 1883. Mrs. Jakab Ernst and Mrs. Peter Ernst were the leaders. The president in 1895 was Mrs. dr. Henrik Soltész. The main objective was to help the poor and the sick. The society was in operation until

1944. Often they organised charity balls, amateur performances, in which even the Christian gentry classes participated. Donations were a matter of prestige, the charity balls were attended not only by the locals but also by guests who arrived from far away places.

The charitable interest of the association was primarily in the monthly support of the needy, but from time to time they made an effort to settle the future of the poor. The congregation and their members who were better off regularly supplied the poor children with their winter clothing, shoes, and school equipment. They collected the dowry for the poor girls and they sponsored the children of the poor parents. There was some inner friction in the association, but in general they acted in unison and helped others.

The social life of the town, as we know from the newspapers of that time, was very vibrant. The various social classes established casinos (social centres), associations, and among the members there were Jewish shopkeepers, tradesmen, landowners, with everybody meeting with others according their social status. The Jews were in the leading positions in these associations.

In 1877 a Fire Brigade Association was formed. Among the 53 founding member, 16 were Jewish .The casino in Tiszafüred had 58 members in 1889. The president was Zsigmond Bán Presbyterian pastor, vice president Jozsef Lipcsey landowner, treasurer dr. Ignác Menczer. Among the 14 member of the committee six were Jewish. In 1870 the casino had 75 members. They members ordered newspapers, had a library, organised balls, gave educational lectures.

In 1896 among the committee members of the Regular-Casino, there were eight Jewish members, they were doctors, lawyers, landowners. Among the committee member of the Civil-Casino was Ignác Lilienfeld. In 1910 the legal representative of the Gentleman-Casino was Dr. Lajos Békefi, the treasurer was Samu Szántó, district court civil servant, and among the committee members were five Jews.

The local Jewish people also took part in the other religion's social programs. In 1892 the Presbyterian congregation organised a

ball at the “Vörös Ökör” restaurant to collect money for the restoration of the roof of the church. We find seven affluent Jewish citizens among the donors for this worthy cause . After the defeat of the Independence war in 1895, Pál Kiss lived in Tiszafüred. Upon his death they organised a benefit concert for his memorial. On the list of donor, there are 20 Jewish names. The next year, Jews took part in collecting money for the fire victims in Szöllös.

## Religious tolerance and emergence of anti-Semitism

Around the turn of the century the newspapers reported on several occasions the peaceful coexistence of the different denominations. A teacher, Dr. Béla Bartha, who lived in Eperjes, but was originally from Tiszafüred, writes in 1888: “In our city, the understanding among the denominations is faultless, thanks to those who are leading the congregations.” Adám Lipcsey published articles in the “Budapesti Naplo” and in the “Eger” - county newspaper- “It is impossible to find, even in the most remote parts of the USA, where the religious tolerance is even more observed than in Tiszafüred. The communal landholding gave to the Catholic priest a full share, even though 90% of the population was Protestant with the usual stoutness, even placed him ahead of the legally accepted Jews”.

In the First World War, 471 men from Tiszafüred served, among them 63 Jews. From this number, 13 died a heroic death; most of them were decorated for their valour. In 1929, 142 Jewish families lived in Tiszafüred, which amounted to 620 people. Twenty of them were well-to-do, most of them had a middle class existence; thirteen family were so poor that they could not pay taxes, even to their religious community. By occupation: they were 3 wholesalers, 7 ran farms, 2 teachers, 50 shopkeepers, 4 solicitors, 5 23 factory workesr,1 industrialist, 3 doctors, 3 office workers, 1 entrepreneur, 15 unemployed, 12 tradesmen, 5 persons with private means, 8 other.

Between the two world wars, anti-Semitism, backed by the state, also gained momentum in Tiszafüred. Neighbours were still on good terms, but as some recall in the higher elementary school they let the children known step by step that they are “different”. Laci

Rubinstein born in 1930 went to the higher elementary school in 1940 and as his mother tells us, that what ever he did, however he solved the problems, the teacher's reaction was:"you guessed well". Laci died in Auschwitz.

## The Holocaust

The consequences of the first world war put an end of those social engagements which existed between the Hungarian elites and the Jewish community. Through the equal rights they enjoyed and through their patronage of commerce, the Jewish community had played an important role in the modernisation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the dominance of the Hungarian speaking inhabitants was only possible with their help. After the "numerus clausus", which restricted the Jews to enter universities and professions, came some stabilization, but from the middle of the thirties the anti-Semitism grew again and the power of politics made it legitimate with its three anti-Jewish laws.

One economic result was the dispossession of Jewish estates. Already before 1944 several licenses were withdrawn from shopkeepers, from pubs, and from trade. With some trumped up pretext or trivial offence, a number of people had to serve gaol sentences of some months. Endre Várkonyi declares "my uncles were harassed from various jobs; one of them, David, was arrested on some sort of pretence (could have been that he sold goods which were not allowed to keep in a Jewish shop). Later they called him up for forced labour, and they took him to Lavocs in the Ukraine, where he stayed a long period. In July 1941 they arrested 15 Jews and interned them to Kistarcsa.

After the outbreak of World War II., they called up the men from the age of 18 to 42, later the older age group was also called, and they took them all off for forced labour. When Hungary joined the war, they were sent to the Russian front, and there, untrained and without proper equipment, they had to clear the minefields. The first martyr from Tiszafüred was Dr. László Blau, solicitor, who stepped on a mine. In April 1944 they recorded 35 persons missing.

The lucky ones stayed mostly inside the country where they had to build airports and their lives depended on the humanism of their company commander and his men. Márton Schwarcz and his company were working on the airport in Szamosfalva when he broke his leg. They took him to Kolozsvár hospital, where they put his leg in plaster. But on the order of a doctor with the rank of major they put him in a shed in the courtyard on a heap of straw, because the major declared that “a Jew should not lie in a bed”. His leg was quickly covered in maggots. Despite everything, he recovered and survived, unlike the rest of his family.

They took inventory of the Jewish owned shops on April 28, 1944. The county authorities first assigned the houses around the railway station for the ghetto, and then later an area in the middle of the town around the synagogue, but in both cases a number of Christian families would have to be moved to a different location. So on the recommendation of Gábor Balog, the municipal magistrate, Gyula Szabo the sheriff designated the brick factory which was owned by a Jew, as the ghetto. The sheriff went out to the locality to be convinced about the suitability of that place. On 8 May the Jews of Tiszafüred district had to move there. According to the 1941 census the number of Jews from surround localities was: in Nagyivan was 1, Poroszlo 128, Sarud 12, Tiszaigar 14, Tisznána 47, Tiszörs 7, Tiszaszöllös 49, Ujlörincfalva 1.

The ghetto to be relatively livable, had to be covered. The brick drying factory was half open so the young ones partly bricked it up. The commander in the first two week was Dr. Jenő Ficzere, the chief constable of the county. The chief of the local gendarmerie Lajos Nagy was transferred and on the 25 May, Jozsef Erdély become the commander of the ghetto, and later the county sheriff sent Dr. Sándor Szilágy, gendarme lieutenant, to control the ghetto. He was the one who oversaw the interrogations and torture in the peasant cottage which had been rented beside the ghetto. To feed the people in the ghetto they collected 59,000 pengő, but they used only 27,000. At that time the weather was unusually harsh: on May 24 according to the newspaper in Eger it was 0.9 degree Celsius, which is close to the freezing point and rain. Despite the harsh weather, the people had to endure it in the half open brick drying factory.

Several times they searched people. The wealthy were bound, cruelly beaten, the men's private parts were beaten with stinging nettles. The head of the Jewish council was Ernő Weiner, timber merchant, his deputy was David Weiszman, shopkeeper. Men were drafted and on May 18, they had to go from the ghetto to Hatvan Gombospuszta. They were divided in two groups, A and B. The first group A consisted of the intellectuals, the rabbis, who were taken straight to Auschwitz. A captain of the army Kálmán Horváth, went around the ghettos of the Miskolc district and gave to a few thousand Jewish men the chance to survive. From Tiszafüred, he sent about 60 men between 14-18 years and the over 60 to forced labour camps.

Endre Várkonyi remembers: "Probably the worst days were before we moved to the ghetto. My poor old grandma called her neighbours, acquaintances and gave away her not so essential possessions: her bottles of jams, which she had treasured for years. Most probably she gave away all her belongings and clothing. Some of them for good, some of them for safekeeping. Those things don't have any significant now, because she never came back".

Lili Weinberger remembers: "On the 8th of May, we went to the brickyard, the ghetto, where first we were under the impression that they are taking us for some work, perhaps in the country or maybe in Austria., so that was a bit reassuring. It was very cold, all the time and raining. It was impossible to go out of the ghetto to the street".

Endre Várkonyi recalls the followings: "We could not leave the ghetto; on the gate was a large board, which announced : this is the place where the people of Jewish race from Tiszafüred district reside - the ghetto. They even collected the dogs and the dogcatcher was parading in front of the ghetto showing the hides of the dogs on an end of a stick".

Mrs. Imre Deak, a Christian lady states: "They piled the possessions from the Jewish flats in the synagogue. It was a vast amount; good quality bed linen, silk quilts. And the mob, how does a mob behaves? Greedy aren't they? I was at my gate and saw it. Some carried so many quilts and pillows that they could not see anymore

where they were going. Some did not need the feathers, only the thick pillow covers, so they slashed the pillow, let the feathers fly and the whole Fő (Main) street looked white, as though it had been snowing”.

In the ghetto, they searched the men and the women mercilessly, looking for any hidden valuables. Dr. Imre Lebovits remembers: “The gendarme investigators arrived and started first with the most respected and the wealthiest people. With cruelty and with the most barbaric methods they started to beat them with stinging nettles on their private parts, interrogating them about the hiding place of their valuables. One could hear those unfortunate peoples’ cries. They beat them, and it didn’t matter if they confessed or not”.

On 8 June 1944 in the morning, by horse drawn cart, and on foot, the Jews of Tiszafüred were driven to the railway station. Though not through the city, but along the banks of the riverbed on the outskirts of the town. This was at least a five kilometre journey, as in the town the Corpus Christi procession was taking place. They cordoned off the surroundings of the station and did not let in the neighbours who were coming to say farewell. In the station office everybody was registered.

Tamás Kuczik, whose father was ordered to transport the Jews on his cart, gives this account: “A railway engine came with four, five or six freight wagons. The windows were blocked with barbed wire, which was brand new. I can even see it today. And then it started: first the children were shuffled in the wagons and they locked the doors. The children started to cry inside; the mothers were crying outside. Then the women were shuffled into the next wagon and they locked the door. Finally, it was the men’s turn. The whole proceeding was quickly done. Then we were ordered to take the suitcases and bags and put them in the wagons. The gendarmes told us to just throw them in, that we didn’t have to be careful with them as the owners would never receive them”.

Dr. Pál Polgáry, the chief magistrate of the administrative district delivered his speech “See you again as fertilisers”.

The train started toward Füzesabony. The Jews from County Heves were assembled in the brick factory at Kerecsend. They were there for one night. That night a few committed suicide; Jenő Nagy veterinarian went mad. Next day they marched them to the train station to Maklár, 10 km away. Klára Weinberger says: "For me the most horrifying memory is the abandoned strollers on both sides of the road".

At the station they crammed 82 people into a cattle truck. The train went: Füzesabony - Miskolc - Kassa - Auschwitz. The duration of the journey was three days in inhuman conditions: without water, without food, without any sanitary facilities. Some people died, some of them went mad in those three days.

Lili Weinberger: "We did not know why; we did not know where they were taking us. The journey started Friday evening and the train rolled and rolled. We had to meet our human demands there. It was already Saturday night, our water was used up, then suddenly the doors opened and we got some more, and then the train rolled on. It was Sunday midday when we arrived in Kassa. They opened the door; some SS came and took everything we had left from us: soap, perfume etc. We were hoping that they would give us some water in exchange. We had some food, but nobody could eat."

The train arrived at Auschwitz on the 13th of June.

Mr. Ernő Szegő: "We arrived in the morning at nine o'clock. They told us to disembark and leave our belongings in the wagons. The elderly were set aside, supposedly they will be taken further by truck. We had to line up in fives, beside the wagons. One soldier whispered to Ibolya Weltman, that the children are going to be separated from their mothers. The news spread quickly and the mothers embraced their little ones tighter and they marched together to their deaths. The elderly were taken away on trucks and told us that we would meet later. We never saw them again. Now we were marched to Mengele, and he sent some people- those he disliked - to the right. Me and my sister were sent to the left. Between the rows SS officers were roaming on their motor cycles with revolvers in their hands. We saw some women with close

cropped hair behind barbed wire working. “Oh My God, what is waiting for us’ ?”.

Lili Weinberger continues: ” My last sight of my father was, when he went to the other side with the men. We were driven forward with only the dresses and sandals we had on. We looked back, where the men were and we gave them a parting glimpse. We never saw them again. We were lined up in fives, with our mother, our aunt and two other relatives. The rows grew less in front of us, we arrived in front of Mengele. I was the closest to him and he waved me to the left, then came Klari, and she was sent to the left too. I did not know what it meant left or right, when Klari said: “No, I want to stay with my mother” Mengele’s answer was: “ No, you are young, you could walk, you have to go that way”, and both of us were pushed to the left. The elderly were 52-53 years old! We were told “they will be taken to a bath and after you will meet them again later. That is how they separated us.”

Mrs. Ernő Szegő again: ”After the selection, they took us for disinfection. They took our dresses and shoes to disinfect. We got back our own shoes, but not our dresses, everybody had to make do with what they could grab. The girls from Slovakia shaved us, cut our hair, then oversaw the baths. After all that, they threw us some dresses, no underwear. That was Birkenau. We were there for two months, 3,000 of us in one barrack.” Then we were transported to Brema to clearing ruins. “Every day, early morning they put us on motor-lorries and took us to work. For breakfast we had black coffee, at the evening, back in the barracks, we had carrot soup, 25 dkg bread and 2 dkg margarine. Many of us at everything at once in the evening, so at least to be full once a day”.

Most of the women who survived the selection were working in different parts of Germany or Poland, clearing ruins or in armaments factory. A number of them died, some from starvation; some even after Liberation from typhus. Lili and Klara Weinberg stayed in Auschwitz.

Lili injured her hand while digging trenches. The wound got infected and they operated on it, but the healing process commenced slowly. She can be thankful for her sister’s cleverness

that she is still alive today. At the end of October one of the soldiers noticed, that her hand was not fully healed, so they sent them both off to the gas chambers. For 3 days there were 108 of them naked, without food or water, crowded in the gas chamber building, waiting for their death. Klara W. says: “In the gas chamber I found a half potato which I shared with my sister. And when my sister said “kühne, freien” (courage, we will be free) we both stood up held hands and said loudly, “we are going to our parents.”

With the advance of the Russian army, the first successful activity of the Red Cross was to rescue them from the gas chamber, on 17th January 1945. Barely alive, one weighed 20 kilos and the other 30 kilos.

In 1941, 442 Jews were registered in Tiszafüred. After the Liberation only 70 were alive. We could not find even one family where every member was alive.

The war, the forced labour, the concentration camps, and the loss of their relatives left a lifetime mark on the survivors. Even those who did not suffer the worst of the horrors were affected. Most of them who came back, emigrated or went to live in Budapest or any other big city.

#### Some comments from current times

Matild Radványi “A number of times I could not eat dinner during the news, when I see that they are killing people here and there. For what and why ? Nothing is worth killing each other”.

Dr. Imre Lebovits: “It cannot go on like this, because hate is an evil adviser. To live in harmony is the most important thing. People never should forget what has happened, and it should never happen again. What happened to us should not happen again; not with the Jews, not with anybody”.