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To Whom It May Concern.

My cousin, Erika Elinson (Elias) of Kibbutz Mishmar Hasharon, Israel, was born in Budapest (Hungary) on the 8th. of January 1936.

Her father, my father and the father of another cousin of ours, Zvi Elias, who also lives in Israel, were brothers. They lived in a small Hungarian village of Sarbogard, and were brought up as religious Jews.

Erika's father moved to Budapest, where he worked as a bank clerk and married Erzsebet Farkas, daughter of the Managing Director of the largest travel agency in Hungary.

In 1938, Hitler's anti-semitic ideas spread over Hungary. As a precaution, we also moved to Budapest, but our grandparents stayed in their villages. Our parents decided to convert to the Lutheran religion, hoping, that thus, we will be able to avoid future prosecution.

History proved otherwise. Our fathers lost their jobs, then they had to serve in special army camps, where Jews worked as forced labourers, first in Hungary, then in the Ukraine, Siberia etc.

During the early 40s we hardly saw our fathers. At the end of the war, we found out, that both our fathers perished, Erika's in Russia and mine in transit to Auschwitz. Our families moved together, and struggled to eke out a living.

In 1944 the "Arrow Movement", (Hungarian equivalent to SS) collected our grandparents and deported them to Auschwitz, where they all perished, except our Grandmother in Sarbogard, who was brave enough to commit suicide before the troops reached them.

We in Budapest, had to leave our home and move into a special "Yellow House" marked with the Star of David, crammed with many other Jewish families. A short time later, our mothers were deported too.

Erika and I obtained Swedish passports, permits, organised by Ralph Wallenberg, which enabled us and other children to move into a special "protected" house, as non Jews. However the "Arrows" soon found out about this and forced us to move into the Ghetto.

Life in the ghetto of Budapest was frightening for children and adults as well. The conditions were appalling, 20 people in one room, hardly anything to eat, constantly fearing that it will be blown up by the retreating German army.

One day our mothers decided to escape from the column marching through Austria, and walking back by night, in great fear of getting caught and be shot on the spot, they eventually returned to Budapest. There they obtained false Christian identification papers.

T.E.
P.D.

When my mother found out where we were, risking her own life she entered the Ghetto and helped us two children to escape. The war in Hungary was at it's peak then, constant bombing, raids by German troops, hangings and hunger was part of every day's life. Our mothers worked as maids in Christian homes, and we lived with them. Many a times it was only God, "luck" or "destiny", that kept us survive the atrocities and the effects of the last few months. At last, the Russian Army liberated us and we could look forward to a new start.

Upon learning the fate of our fathers and grandparents, our mothers eventually found new partners. Erika and I, who virtually grew up as brothers and sisters, separated then.

During the Communist regime; Erika's grandfather lost his job, being a so called "bourgeois", lost his retirement benefits and had to struggle to earn a living. Her grandmother became sick.

During the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, we both decided to emigrate and escaped through the then temporarily open border.

Erika's mother stayed in Budapest, to take care of her ailing grandmother, while she and her stepfather settled in Paris. A few years later Erika's mother also joined them. I, and my family settled in Melbourne where we have been living ever since.

In 1968, owing to apparent anti-semitic feelings amongst the French people at the time, Erika and parents decided to emigrate to Israel. They settled in the kibbutz, where within a few months, she married her husband, Itzhak.

Owing to the years of adversities, during the Nazi persecution and later under the Communist rule, Erika's mother developed serious nervous symptoms and needed physical and mental treatment. All these events had adverse effects on Erika as well, who at first, required treatments, then, by choice, turned to Judaism, which she still cultivates with enthusiasm.....

This is a short, abbreviated version of events, which affected our lives between 1938 and today. The memories are still haunting. Many other dreadful stories could be added, enough to fill a book. I hope however, that for this purpose, the above will suffice.

Should any one wish to obtain more detailed information about the tragedies we were involved in, please do not hesitate to contact the writer.

Signed by: Tibor Elias M.I.E. Aust.

Tibor Elias

Emil Braun J.P.

In the presence of:

Melbourne, 27th. of January 1996

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