

Irene Hajos Kluger

Wartime Experience: Concentration Camp Survivor

Of all my stories these few lines represent the most dramatic moments of my life.

I was born May 9 1922 in Nagykaniza, Hungary. My father's name was Simon Kluger and my mother's maiden name was Giselle Ungar. I had two brothers, one Joseph and the other Tibor. My father had diverse commercial activities and because of this had arrived at a certain state of financial security. My brother and I attended school at the Gymnasium. My oldest brother obtained his Baccalaureat with "honorable" mention but was unable to attend the University because quotas "Numerous Clauses" already existed in Hungary from 1920 the date when Horthy took power. I went to school until the high school level. After that I preferred to go to a school of high fashion.

We had therefore a normal life because the Jews of Hungary were somewhat protected until 1944, although my brother was pressed into the Hungarian army and was part of the Jewish workers forcibly taken to the Ukraine. When the Germans entered Hungary, the 19th of March 1944, everything changed very quickly. The "Ghettos" began in April and the first deportations at the end of that month. I was part of these first convoys and arrived at Auschwitz Birkenau on May 2, 1944. I was with my parents and my little brother. They never returned. I recently received official papers, which told me that my father, at 59 years of age, entered the camp at Buna Monowitz on May 2, 1944, and was wounded August 20, 1944 during the allied bombardments of Buna. On the 23rd of August he was taken to Birkenau where he was gassed.

I was chosen for work in a munitions factory, The Union, where four young Polish girlfriends of mine stole some explosive powder that was used to blow up Crematorium IV on October 7, 1944. They were hung the 6th of January 1945. The work was very hard and this continued until the evacuation of Auschwitz, January 17, 1945, by the horrible March of the Dead. I found myself after that in Ravensbruck, and then at Neustadt-Gleues where I was liberated on May 2, 1945 by the advancing Soviet and American armies. I was transferred by the Red Army to Prenslau and was repatriated to Hungary at the end of September 1945.

I got married in Hungary to Ladislav Hajos, a dress designer. We came to France in September 1946, and we became naturalized citizens. My four children were therefore born in France: Chantal February 7, 1947, Yves May 9, 1948, Claude July 6, 1952, and Patricia December 28, 1955. My husband worked in Paris as a dress designer. In 1954 I opened a ready-made clothing store until 1987. I separated from my husband in 1986.

Since then, I have spent all my time to the memory of the deportation and am an active member of the Society of Prisoners of Auschwitz where I continue to work. Having lived in Eaubonne since 1952 I have researched the subject of English and Australian who fell over Eaubonne in August of 1944. I found their names and they were then engraved on a monument erected in their memory. I had the honor of receiving the Medal of the Chevalier de L'Ordre du

Merite for this work. I hope to have the energy for a long time to continue this work of Memory, which I hold very close to my heart.

Des dossiers du Mémorial de la Shoah–Paris

Irène HAJOS KLUGER

née le 09/05/1922 à NAGYKANIZSA (HONGRIE) de Simon KLUGER et Giselle UNGAR.

Déportée depuis la HONGRIE en Mai 1944 pour AUSCHWITZ, rescapée

Mon père étant commerçant, nous avons vécu dans une certaine aisance jusqu'en Mars 1944. J'ai fait partie des premiers convois pour AUSCHWITZ. J'ai été sélectionnée pour travailler dans l'usine de munitions l'UNION WERCKE. Dans cette usine, 4 jeunes filles polonaises ont sorti de la poudre illégalement qui servi par la suite à faire sauter le Krematorium IV, le 7/10/1944. Elles furent pendues le 6/01/1945. Le 17/01/1945, évacuation du camp, marche de la mort. Je me suis retrouvée à RAVENSBRUCK, puis à NEUSTADT-GLEWES où j'ai été libérée le 02/05/1945 par les soviétiques et les américains. Rapatriée en HONGRIE fin septembre 1945. Mariée à Ladislav HAJOS, nous sommes venus en France en Septembre 1946. Habitant EAUBONNE depuis 1952, j'ai effectué des recherches sur les aviateurs anglais et australiens tombés en Août 1944 sur EAUBONNE. J'ai retrouvé leurs noms qui ont pu être gravés sur un monument érigé à leur mémoire.