

# A MEMORIAL OF WORDS FOR ÉVA

1925-1944

BY MÁRIA ZIMÁN

*translated from Hungarian by Hajnal Csatorday*

**A Memorial of Words for Éva (BETÜSIRKÖ ÉVÁNAK)  
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**Foreword**

One would think that everything has already been said and written about the period of Nazi terror. But there's one untold story, and God knows how many more, which I must now tell.

Some of my friends, who read the manuscript, asked why I waited so long. Here's my answer to them and to those who would ask the same.

I kept silent partly because it was too painful for me to put what happened into words, I have never talked about it. Those who knew were there and were responsible for what happened, therefore, it was not in their interest to talk. They were another reason why I kept silent, since, in order to make the story public, I would have had to keep track of their whereabouts, their lives. I did not want to ever hear or know anything about them, much less seek information. I was not interested and I did not want revenge. I only wanted not to know of their existence, that they went on with their lives.

However, I did learn that Imre Liebshitz (Lakatos), the brains behind the scheme, was, allegedly, indicted (in 1945-46) soon after the events and imprisoned until he escaped and left Hungary in 1956 with many others. I heard bits of information about the other two active participants, Eva Révész and Alfonz Várnai-Weisz, that the former was pensioned off by the educational authorities and the latter had a private gynecological practice. Both live in Budapest.

I know nothing else about them or anything about the other participants, which is, undoubtedly, my fault. What could I have done had I known more? Perhaps I could have brought Eva back. Nothing else mattered! But the mistake has been made and I do not want to add another. I do not want to bury Eva's memory forever.

This is why I decided to tell her story even at this late date.

**MÁRIA ZIMÁN-IZSÁK February 1989**

**February 26, 1984—ÉVA would be 59 today**, but she will always be nineteen and a half, the same age she was forty years ago when she died. We were almost the same age at the

time: I was two and a half years older than her. We were sisters, best friends, and spiritual companions.

Today, I look back upon her as if she were my child. I am sixty and she stayed nineteen. No, not nineteen—nineteen and a half. Let me not deprive her of those six months of her short life. I have a husband and children, and I'm a grandmother. She was never given these joys. She had her childhood loves in secret. She did not live to raise her own family, to plan her present and future. She had to do all of her living in nineteen and a half years. Perhaps this is why she lived her few years so intensely and what made her capable of overcoming her youthful, powerful life instinct and submit herself to the death sentence. It's not by mistake that I use the term submit instead of coercion as is usually the case when condemned to death. She accepted death because she was told that it would save others, and she did not hesitate to give her life if it would buy the freedom of others.

We grew up together, our childhood and adolescent lives were close-knit. We played with the same toys, and later we were imbued with the same ideals. She was the little one, yet I always saw her as a "head" taller. It was not only the way I saw her, it was a fact. Her soaring spirit, knowing no obstacles, made her tall. I saw her as the light and myself as her shadow. She, on the other hand, said that she envied me for my level-headedness, my even temper. We were both convinced that things were fine as they were: we complemented one another. This conviction bound us together in everything we did before ruthless and hypocritical people came to stand between us driving Éva, my sister and best friend, to her death. She was the victim of a cruel age, the age of Hitlerism. But her execution could not even the most devious methods of execution of the time.

Oh, Éva, why were you born at all. In the past forty years I have often wished that you had never been born. My mother, my poor mother, who died in the Auschwitz gas chamber, told me long ago that when, at the age of 42, she became pregnant with Éva, her youngest, she felt shame for she was too "old." My father comforted her, saying, "don't worry, you'll see, she will be the joy and hope of our old age." Joy and Hope ended her life at the same time as the woman who gave her life: in 1944, the year when all joy and hope was destroyed.

We were the youngest in a family of eight children: she was the last-born and I the one before. The difference in age between ourselves and our eldest sister, Margit, was so great that

she could have been our mother. Rozsi came next, then Sara, followed by our two brothers, Sándor and Jenő, then Piri, who was three years older than me. Both our parents had to work hard to support the eight of us, thus, it was left almost entirely to our sisters to bring us up. Ours was an average lower middle class family, never well-off but never hard up either. Our parents spoke Yiddish between themselves and Hungarian with us. They respected tradition, observed the Sabbath. We always looked forward to Purim, because mother baked a variety of pastry then, to Pesach and the autumn holidays, because we always got new clothes and shoes then. As in most families at the time, our father was the omnipotent "head of the family" never to be questioned. He was strict with us, rarely showing his love, but we always felt it. But my sister and I, the two youngest, were given much love by our quiet mother and grownup siblings.

Our parents had no time for politics. It was not an easy task to provide for eight children. Ever since I became a mother myself providing for only two children with my husband, and with both of us earning good money, I've often asked myself: how were my parents able to satisfy our manifold needs. Taking only the most basic ones into consideration: we had to eat at least three times a day and we were always neatly dressed, even if modestly.

Concerning my father's political views, I only remember that he mourned for the "good old" days of the Monarchy, a feeling he shared with many Jewish contemporaries. But even in this he was deeply humiliated. Our elder sisters told us that when father happily greeted a Hungarian army officer after the Vienna Award, the officer responded by calling him a filthy Jew. Father really took it to heart. But politics as such was not discussed in the family, at most we talked about a sort of "economic policy," about making a living.

This lasted until Éva and I, the two youngest, began to grow up. We were the ones to break with tradition, to revolutionize the household, sweeping everyone along, including our stern and reserved father. We asserted our "persuasive power" through their love, causing many problems and considerable pain. We enjoyed their complete support in all our later activities, made all the more easy by our inviting, warm home which was always open to everybody. Thus, our home was filled with our friends from the Hásomér Hácáir and from the labor movement later.

I was barely nine when inadvertently I became involved with the Hásomér Hácáir organization in Szatmár. A few young people rented a modest house in our neighborhood and

founded the organization. We heard them sing Hebrew marches late into the night and saw them in the courtyard dancing the hora. As if drawn by a magnet, I went to watch them every day. I didn't go alone. My little sister clung to me and it was my job to watch over her. From then on we became inseparable until the end.

Soon, the "chavers" noticed us and gave us things to do. We didn't need much encouragement before we began recruiting other children and formed a group of girls of about the same age. The youngest member of the group was a barely six-year-old wide-eyed little girl who was given the name Chava. I was named Miriam. Our family did not stand in the way of our lively activity. They watched over us with love and attention, noting who the other members were; they met the leader of our group who visited us several times later on assuring our parents that we were in good hands. My father paid our membership fee every month. Membership fees and contributions by a few well-to-do Zionist sympathizers paid the rent for the small house.

In 1932, at the age of ten, I was allowed to go to the camp organized by the Hásomér Hácáir at Rév (near Nagyvárad). From then on until 1939 I took part in every event organized by the Hásomér Hácáir. I went alone to the first two, to

Rev and Ratosnya, because Éva was too young to go. Even today, looking back, I keep wondering at the bravery of my simple, tradition-bound parents to allow their young daughter to go to the far-away mountains in the company of strangers. I was the youngest among the several hundreds of participants. One night, sitting around the campfire, a tall chaver, appropriately nicknamed Gulliver, lifted me high in the air and introduced me as the youngest member present at the camp. (Not much later, Gulliver, whose real name I never learned, immigrated into Israel, and today lives in the kibbutz of Dalia.)

Éva did not accompany me to the first two camps, so when I arrived home she listened eagerly to my "account" of what happened. Night after night I talked and she just listened. From then on, whenever we were apart for any length of time, on the first night of our reunion we always talked til morning.

In 1938, I was assigned the task of organizing a young girls' group. Éva became one of the most outstanding and active members of this group we called the "freedom" group. I kept a diary of the group's activity, including a brief description of every member. Since, remarkably,

this diary has survived, I can now quote the observations I made at the time. This is how I, a very young "leader," saw Éva at the dawn of adolescence.

"... in Chava's case, the family and the movement are kept separate. She never lets family affairs prevent her from carrying out work in the movement. Her behavior on the street, at home, and in the group is consistent and everything that deviates from straightforwardness, she despises. She's active in the group and demands the same from everybody. She's possibly the only one who feels confined by the group. She finds the scope of activity within the group restricted, would like lead an organization..."

The time she had left of her life passed quickly. We went to all Transylvanian meetings, Hásomér Hácáir members were frequent visitors in our house and were always made to feel at home there. Our parents continued look on our work in the movement with love and we enjoyed their total support. All the greater was the interference by the authorities hampering the work of our movement. It became increasingly difficult to obtain the license to operate, to rent a room for our meetings; the Siguranca [Romanian authorities, security organs] made "spontaneous" raids with growing frequency until finally the newly formed Cuza-Goga government outlawed the Hásomér Hácáir.

However, the fighting spirit had by then become so much a part of us that without giving it a second thought we made the transition to illegal work.

The first artillery shots launching the Second World War were fired somewhere in Poland, and Nazi terror flared high, spreading rapidly in our direction. In 1939-40, the more important leaders of the Hásomér Hácáir, who were only three or five years older than us, immigrated into Israel. At our last farewell campfire I gave my diary for safekeeping to one of our leaders, Jakobi Gidaliehu, asking him to tear it to pieces in case I should not reach Israel. After thirty-five years Jaki returned my diary in Jerusalem.

Thus we were left without leaders, without any real chance of following them to Israel within a foreseeable period. The artillery fires came nearer, and we sought and found new ways to work in the illegal anti-fascist movement. It was an almost natural transition for Éva and me. Inactivity was alien to us: we had to fight for "justice," for "freedom." It was a marvelous thing that we continued to enjoy the support of our parents and our entire family. Our house gave

home to illegal meetings, where, among other things, we met regularly to listen to the voice of London and Moscow, turning down the volume and holding our breath.

In the early forties, the Siguranca tracked us down and my "contact" told me to go underground. This concerned both Éva and me, so we had to tell the family that arrest was imminent and we had to go into "hiding." As always, we talked to our elder sisters first, then they talked to our parents. Our dear old parents, whose love for us always proved strong, found a hiding place in the house of our brother-in-law's parents outside of the city. The information was correct. Two days later, Siguranca agents came for us with a search warrant, and when they didn't find us, they took into custody two of our sisters, Margit and Sári (bless their memory), and interrogated them for days to find out what they knew about our whereabouts. My father, my poor, "stern," dear father took our sisters food to prison every day without a word of complaint. Subsequently, my sisters told me that they wouldn't have betrayed our hiding place even had they been lorn to pieces.

Meanwhile, our somer? friends in Kolozsvár heard about our situation and decided to send someone for us, and to help hide us.

Theo Vaianu (called Uriel Bargay today, who lives at the kibbutz of Dália) arrived one day and took me to Kolozsvár. Éva followed shortly after. We found refuge for a while with the Vaianu family—well-off Zionist sympathizers (who later immigrated)—then Ferenc Jambor, the reputed editor of *Új Kelet* (New East) (he too immigrated), and in the home of Viktor Brassai, poet and renown poetry recitalist. We were received with love and sympathy everywhere. At the time, the great majority of the Hásomér Hácáir youth, who were unable to immigrate joined the underground working class movement and became peace fighters, anti-fascist, communist militants. The two of us also joined up as a matter of course. We met many worthy young intellectuals and workers who were ready to do anything to fight for freedom, and recruited many more. Among others, we met Eszter Boros, a young Hungarian nurse who worked in the Jewish hospital and whose apartment became a sanctuary for a number of refugees. We also became friends for life with the worker-poet Lajos Mráz, who descended from an old family of fighters: wherever there was a fight, a Mráz was sure to be there. His wife, Ilonka Jeremiás, was to have played an important pan in saving Éva, but was prevented by my sister's cold-blooded murderers.

To return to the 1940s, we were in Kolozsvár at the time of the Vienna Award, which caused a general uproar in the city for it promised nothing good. All the democratic forces, many-many young militants joined in the anti-Hitler and anti-Horthy demonstrations carrying placards and loudly proclaiming their opposition. It was impossible to distinguish among Romanian, Jewish, and Hungarian anti-fascists, all of whom recognized that the reannexation of Transylvania was a menacing sign of the inevitable spread of fascism.

Éva and I also joined in the march. The demonstrations were broken up with clubs and from every corner of Kolozsvár the words of "Dear Transylvania, we're here" could be heard. Indeed, they were everywhere: Horthy's and Szalasi's henchmen, Hitler's most loyal servants who were often more murderous than their master.

This turn meant that, since the Siguranca virtually ceased to exist, we could go home to our parents in Szatmár, or Szatmárnémeti as it was then called. We were anxiously waiting for the moment to see our loved ones for it seemed we had been away from home infinitely long. I don't remember why, but Éva left a few days before I did. As I was getting ready for the trip, I felt happy and anxious alternately. Happy because I would see my loved ones again, and anxious because of a possible reproach by my parents, especially my father, for all the pain I had caused them.

When the long awaited moment finally came and I crossed the threshold of our house, all my father said, embracing me, was "You're home, my child." What did we do in this new situation? Barely had we settled down and already we were looking for new contacts. It did not take long. People, who had been persecuted by the Siguranca, began to "sneak" back gradually, and together with them and our new comrades we resumed our secret meetings, organized anti-fascist recitals, collected money for those in prison, distributed anti-fascist and anti-war leaflets. But there was one thing we were unaware of. Namely, that the Romanian Siguranca and Hungarian counter-intelligence were not enemies, despite their bloody chauvinism and hatred for one another. They fought hand in hand against the "common menace," the anti-fascists and primarily the Jews. The archives with complete files were passed from one to the other. This transfer was repeated in 1945 when Transylvania was reannexed once more to Romania. Hungarian counter-intelligence handed over the complete record of the 1941 trial of

Transylvanian communists to the Romanians who, after a thorough analysis, used it to supplement their files on underground activists.

In spring 1941, we had to go into hiding again. Éva went to Nagybánya, I went to Budapest. Shortly after I settled down, she followed me there. Budapest offered better conditions for illegal work, it was easier to hide in the crowds and disappear without a trace. As I have already mentioned, every reunion was a memorable event for us because there was so much we had to talk about. Éva, who was barely 17, talked about her first love whom she met at Nagybánya. J.H. was ten years older than her, a very handsome, educated man, and a leader in the working class movement, who was immediately attracted by the intelligent and very beautiful young girl (she was like a blooming flower) and did everything he could to charm her. It was not hard for him to conquer Éva, since, as I was to learn, he was known to be very experienced. When I met him later, I too felt the almost irresistible power of his personality which he never failed to use—not before he met Éva, nor later. He was one of most educated and energetic men in the Transylvanian movement occupying important positions, both before and after the war.

So he was Éva's first love whom she loved with all the devotion of a seventeen-year-old girl. But her happiness, lasting only a few brief months, was followed by bitter disappointment. J.H. continued his usual life of conquests, "charmed" by a married woman this time. The woman told Éva: "You still have your whole life before you, but I have to do the best of the years left to me." After the war I saw her again at the home of a mutual friend. She survived, while Éva did not. My friends looked uncomprehendingly at me as I turned and left without a word. But she, who called herself Uki, understood.

My poor beloved Éva's intense enjoyment of her brief happiness was matched by her bitter disappointment in her first and last love.

Slowly her wounds healed, helped by her strong willpower and active life. We lived and worked in Pest. Our parents had trained us early so we were able to support ourselves. We reduced our expenditures to a bare minimum in order to be able to buy food and cigarettes for young political prisoners. At the same time we attended a number of progressive anti-fascist cultural events. We went to the concerts of the famous "Itinerant Choir" (often as members of the choir) and frequently to cultural events to see progressive actors like Hilda Gobbi, Tamás Major,

Oszkár Ascher, Pál Jáko, and others perform dramatic pieces and recite poetry expressing their opposition to fascism which was rapidly engulfing the country. Éva, never an outstanding student in school (because she disliked to memorize, she said), now learned Villon's ballads, Heine's, Ady's, and Attila József's poems by heart, and cited long pages from Imre Madách's drama, "The Tragedy of Man." We read a lot, bought books (we always had money to spare for that) collecting valuable works by such famed authors as Thomas Mann, Feuchtwanger, Anatole France, Romain Rolland, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, and others.

As I may have mentioned, during our stay in Pest we were actively involved in the work to support anti-fascist prisoners by spending all our "spare" money on food parcels, we visited our imprisoned friends regularly showing our solidarity and gave moral support by relaying information, messages from their families. It was around that time (I don't remember the exact date) that the case of the Transylvanian anti-fascist fighters was tried in a penitentiary near Pest. The trial was conducted behind closed doors, yet we were also there, though I don't remember how we got inside, together with other young and not so young people, relatives and others. Since we could not afford to be absent from work for long, Éva and I took turns to go to the trial. We saw our friends from Szatmár and Nagybánya there, including Moritz Weisz (who died a few years ago), who fell in love with Éva practically as a child and often told me that he was never able to forget her.

Éva returned to Szatmár later to be on hand to help the comrades tried there. The two cases were part of the same famous 1941 trial where, as we know, the accused were arrested, starting with those at the top and working down. They were betrayed chiefly by Júlia Szabó who had access to a great deal of information. She was broken by varied psychological and physical methods of interrogation of Hungarian counter-intelligence and was turned from a communist into a Hungarian believer in God. She was the key witness at the hearings who knew everything about everybody, and what little she didn't know, she missed hearing about by accident. In the case of arrested Jews, the investigators simply disregarded their being communists, but in the case of Hungarians they expressed their "astonishment." in thousands of ways, saying, "... we understand why Jews are communists, but what are you, a Hungarian, doing among them and in your own country too?" And when some of them tried to deny being a communist, Juci Szabo, a communist, turned good Hungarian countered: "he did know he was involved in communist activity!"

During the hearings at Szatmár Éva supplied basketfuls of food and obtained everything the accused needed. (Because of the large number of arrested persons, or on grounds of some other, unknown criterion, the communist trial of 1941 was conducted in several cities, including Szatmár, indicting people from Várad and Nagybánya too.)

I left Budapest in the fall of 1943 and returned to Szatmár. We had many things to talk about. I told her that there had been another wave of arrest in Pest and many of our acquaintances were arrested, most of them taken to the prison at Sátoraljaújhely. Since I had already "visited" them several times, we decided that Éva would go to the next one on March 18, 1944, with a parcel of food, of course. We told our parents that our friend in Pest, Magda Berkó (in whose home in Pest I had lived and who played an important part in saving my life later on), asked us to do something for her in the country where her relatives lived. In the morning of March 18, 1944, Éva boarded the train for Sátoraljaújhely, a long and tedious journey with two or three transfers. We did not know that it was the morning before one of the most horrible days in history, March 19, 1944. By nightfall we heard that the Germans invaded the country. Terror filled the air.

Many Jews, who had been taken to labor camps in Poland, knew precisely that German invasion meant the extermination of Jews.

I was terrified. Éva was away on a journey that was a difficult one in every way. My parents had no idea of the real purpose of her trip, so the worry and responsibility was mine. Evening came and she still hadn't arrived. The news spread by word of mouth that the German army occupied every station. In order to avoid making my parents suspect that there was something amiss, I went to bed like everybody else, but when they fell asleep, I slipped out of the house and, trembling with anxiety, kept vigil at the gate praying: "Éva, come home, let me see you just once more!..." My prayer was answered, and I saw her once more. She arrived in the still dark early hours of March 19th. She told me that there was a huge commotion in the prison because the inmates rebelled and demanded their release, saying that they did not want to be caught by the Germans. Éva had just time to hand over her parcel and speak a few words with one of our best friends, J.N., who told her to leave immediately. Subsequently we learned that the rebellion was suppressed by force. On her way home, she saw Germans everywhere. Luckily, she made it home and nothing else mattered at the moment.

The pace of events quickened. It was clear to everybody that ghettoization was to be the next step. Soon the boundaries of the ghetto were designated including Báthory Street and the neighboring area where the greatest number of Jews, especially religious Jews, lived. I think it is called Mártírok útja today.

From the point of view of ghettoization, our sister Piri and her nine-month-old son were our greatest problem. Sanyi, her husband, was in a labor camp somewhere, anywhere. We didn't have an address only the camp's postal number. Sanyi, who saw his son Robi only once for a few minutes, didn't know at the time that his parents and two beautiful sisters were deported to Poland together with many other Jews of Polish origin. He never saw them again. I can still remember clearly the night when Sanyi, who stole away from the labor battalion near Szatmár, came home and raising his son high, gazed happily at him. He never saw his son and wife again.

To continue with the story, the family's chief problem was how to save Piri and her son from being ghettoized. We thought of a way: Mrs. Jenő Pápai, or Ági, a family friend who lived at Nagybánya, said she would take in Piri and her child and try to hide them. But after only two or three days Piri came back saying that she couldn't bear the separation and the family's fate was her fate. And, unfortunately, she did share the fate of most of the family: she was gassed in Auschwitz. It is a well-known fact that many of the young mothers, who were willing to give their babies to older people, survived. But nothing could persuade my sister to give up her child.

The time of ghettoization was rapidly approaching and we believed, and yet (bund hard to believe, that this would be the end. Without much conviction, Éva and I began to sing Tosca's aria: I must die, however much I wish to live, and our sister Margil nodded in agreement: how true.

A few days before ghettoization began, an unexpected chance to save the "two little ones" arrived in the person of Magda Berkó, Mrs. István Losonci today, our Christian friend from Budapest, much to the family's relief. Her anti-fascism and readiness to make any sacrifice would deserve a separate chapter. She said that she came to take me to Pest and save me from the ghetto. At the same time, a young man from Nagyvárad called Béla Nádler, a Jew who worked in Szatmár then, fell in love with Éva and wanted to save her at all cost. He offered to hide Éva in Nagyvárad with the help of his friends.

Our father died at the age of sixty-four the year before, in 1943. Our darling mother, sisters and brothers shouted with selfless joy that the "two little ones" would be saved.

One day in April 1944, I forget the exact day, we boarded the express train: Magdi and I for Budapest, Éva and Béla N.'s friend for Nagyvárád. We boarded the train with a heavy heart leaving our loved ones behind. Forever.

The train was crowded with German officers and Hungarian soldiers. There were two Hungarian army officers in our compartment and it seemed to us that they were watching us. Éva and I sat facing each other not daring to speak or even look at one another since we were supposed to strangers. Éva had original Christian ID papers made out to Mancsi Ari. Our nextdoor neighbor, a young Hungarian girl of about the same age, who liked Éva very much, gave her own identity papers to Éva. I didn't have any new documents yet. Naive as we were, it didn't occur to us how much alike we looked and anyone would realize on first sight that we were related. Silent and filled with fear, we traveled together as far as Ermihalyfalva, then separated afraid to even look at each other and without a goodbye kiss. Éva had to transfer at Ermihalyfalva and she and her companion got off the train. We watched paralyzed with fear as the two officers also got off. We were convinced that they were following Éva. We traveled on in silence. Magdi took from her handbag the pictures of little Robi and other members of the family, tore them to pieces and flushed them down the toilet, saying in a shaky voice that we shouldn't have any "compromising documents" on our person. We were both preoccupied with our fears. However, the following day we received a reassuring telegram: "Arrived without problems, everything's fine, Éva," dispelling our nightmarish thoughts. We were tricked by our overwrought imagination into believing that we were being followed. However, given our situation at the time, the atmosphere of distrust and the threat of arrest, this possibility could not really be excluded. But Éva was all right, nothing happened to her, and she was safe, so everything was fine.

Magdi set out to fix me up with a new ID without delay. Her first act was to get Christian papers for me, which we then used to rent a room in a boardinghouse on Svabhegy. We explained to the owner that I needed the room because I was very weak and needed rest and fresh air. This was not entirely a lie, since I was really exhausted by the hardships of the preceding period. The boardinghouse was full of guests, and, as I later learned, we all had the same reason

for being there. Gradually, sounding out each other, we came to understand every look, every unspoken word. (A novel could be written about this.) The owner was a Hungarian lady, called Mrs. Szegő I think, but a Jewish family owned the boardinghouse originally but they had to go into hiding. (The following has nothing to do with the story, but I feel compelled to write it down.) One day, the original owner and her daughter of about my age took the risk of coming to the villa to pick some clothes. Mrs Szegő became very excited because she already considered everything in the house her own. Since she thought she had nothing to fear from me, her "Christian" tenant, she told me with a glint of fury in her eyes: "... those filthy Jews won't come here again, because I'm calling the police..." It wasn't easy, but somehow I managed to warn the girl to get away as fast as they could because Mrs Szegő was calling the police. A few minutes before the police arrived, Mrs Szegő was astonished and chagrined to find the two women gone.

I lived at this boardinghouse at 11 Felhő utca on Svábhegy in Buda, a few blocks away from one of the Gestapo headquarters, until Horthy's henchmen tracked me down and I had to flee with only the dress I was wearing.

I have not yet mentioned Tibor. He was a friend of my family and the youngest son of a family in Szatmár called Kolb. They were on good terms with our sisters but we, the youngest, did not see them much. Then Tibi began to pay frequent visits and, although there weren't really any telltale signs, I knew I was the reason. When Éva and I were leaving, he also came to the station and shyly kissed me goodbye. I had been in Pest for perhaps a week when Tibi suddenly arrived. He said, he couldn't bear not knowing anything about me, so he came after me and would I please accept his love and support. He had his Christian brother-in-law's ID papers so he was able to find work. From that time on until the end of October, when Hungarian fascists caught him at an illegal meeting, he protected me from pecuniary problems and gave his loyal love. After the war one of our acquaintances told me that he met Tibor in an arms factory in Germany and he often talked about me. The factory was a target of frequent bombing and he probably died there. He was tall with wavy blond hair and blue eyes. He took his love for me with him. I also loved him.

Sándor and Jenő, my brothers who escaped from the labor battalion, were also hiding out in Pest at the same time as I was. A Sekler woman called Ilona Mathe hid them together with six other escaped Jews. She gave them food and everything else they needed. Ilonka helped

everyone she could. She had no political convictions, she was merely a Human Being. In December, a few weeks or only days before the liberation, the Hungarian Nazis discovered the hiding place and brutally tortured the people they found there, including Bandi Kain, my 16 or 17-year-old nephew. Toward dawn, they were bound in pairs and lead to the Danube. My two brothers, bound together with their hands behind their backs, struggled their bonds loose, and Jenő started to run. They shot at him, he stumbled and fell. The killers thought they shot him (so did he) and left him alone. Under the cover of the night he dragged himself to a family we knew where the husband was a Christian, the wife a Jew. I found him there the following day tortured to the point beyond being unrecognizable. I took him to Mátyásföld where I was hiding in Albert Balogh's home (may he rest in peace), Tibi's anti-fascist colleague. He took me in when I had to flee from the Svabhegy. Using the identification papers Magda got for me, I was free to come and go, but my brother had to stay in the attic until the liberation.

Only the two of us survived of the whole family. (Jenő died on November 20, 1988, in Israel at the age of 74 and was laid to rest in the cemetery at Cholon.) He knew, but didn't tell me what happened to Sándor. He said that he was sure Sándor was taken to Germany. Later, he told me that on the way to the Danube Sándor whispered to him in a tormented voice: "Manci will go crazy." But Manci didn't go crazy...

Poor Sándor said nothing about his own pain and worries about his love, Lili Hermann, who survived the horrors of the war in a sanatorium in Kolozsvár with the help of doctors. I went to see her after the war. Beautiful Lili who became her own shadow, didn't ask anything. She told me that she knew Sándor was no longer alive. In feigned indignation I asked how could she say that to me, his sister. She quietly answered: "Manci, don't say anything, I know the exact minute he died, and ever since then I have nothing to live for." And after a few short months of self-torture, she followed her love into death.

To continue the story, while I was living in Pest Horthy's Proclamation was broadcast (when Horthy tried to disengage from the war). The people who were waiting to be liberated from the German oppression and those who simply wanted to keep abreast of events, opened their windows, turned up the volume to listen to the proclamation on radio. It was repeated all

day long. We thought we were saved. But Szalasi and the Hungarian fascists were getting ready to take vengeance. I lost Sándor and Tibi afterwards.

Mátyásföld, where I lived, was bombed continuously. People lived in crowded, long corridor-like shelters. When I got out, and I often did because I wanted to see everything, I mixed with the pedestrians with the assurance and coolness of a born "Aryan." And I saw everything and seeing the indifference of people, of the crowds was the most painful. People in endless lines were herded into the ghetto and I heard bystanders comment: "they deserve it...these won't be eating goose-liver anymore..." One day I saw an old woman and an old man shuffle along at the end of a long line. A young armed soldier walked behind them. I said to myself: perhaps this boy feels sorry for them too and is not happy to escort these people. Growing weary, the old man stumbled now and again. As if to rebut my charitable thoughts, the armed "boy" slammed the butt of his gun into the old man's side. He didn't even groan. I thought of my mother, my brothers and sisters, and suddenly felt indifferent: was there a future or wasn't there? I didn't care. Perhaps this was what made me so cool. For example, when Tibor was arrested, I learned that he was held at the police headquarters on Gróf Vigyázó Street. I packed some food and went to the heavily guarded building. I asked one of the guards to have the package sent to Tibi. He looked at me and said: "you're Jewish." I smiled at him and said nothing. He smiled too as if he were my accomplice and took the package. I never knew whether Tibor got any of the food.

But I've digressed. It's Éva I want to write about.

Éva and I kept in touch by correspondence. In spite of the turmoil, postal service was relatively normal. The letters came to Tiber's place of work. At first her news were good. She wrote, among other things, that she had met very v, interesting and "valuable" people (her later murderers) and she was learning a great deal from them. She implied that they were "comrades." Once she wrote that one of them, the only woman in the group, thought there was too much mushincss in our letters. There will be more about her- later. Her name was Éva Révész and she was one of those who, in cold blood without any "mushiness" whatsoever, voted for Éva's execution, and claimed her coat afterward. (It's "logical," isn't it? Éva was no longer cold.) I was incensed by her "criticism." Being apart, Éva and I tried to give as much love and encouragement as we could" in our letters. So I wrote to Éva that our correspondence was no one's business and

how dare anyone read our letters. I did not know that by that time Éva was closely guarded by the "comrades" and could not make a move without the approval of the "top organs." Éva intimated that she became good friends with someone in the group. She called him Csuli, a nickname Alfonz Weisz-Várnai was known by.

After some time, Éva wrote that her place of residence was no longer satisfactory and she must move—in other words, find another hide-out—and that there were several possibilities. It didn't seem at all as if she were in a desperate situation where her life was at stake. Tibi's family knew some people in Váradi and we told Éva to look them up and ask them to help. She never explained why she didn't turn to them, nor did she refer to the letter. Today, I believe that they never gave her that letter, especially since, as I was to learn later, someone else always read my letters first.

Shortly after, a singular opportunity arose. A very good old friend of ours, Ilonka Jeremiás Mrs Mráz came to see me in Pest. She was visiting her husband at an internment camp. She was a Jew, he a Hungarian, therefore, she enjoyed preferential treatment. She lived in Kolozsvár and did not have to fear for her life and freedom. Hungarian anti-fascists were treated much more leniently than Jews. For instance, when Tibor and others were arrested, some of whom were Hungarians, the Hungarians were later released, while the Jews were deported to Germany and most of them died there. I told Ilonka about Éva's predicament and she immediately offered to take her in and take care of her in Kolozsvár. Right away we notified Éva to go on a certain day to the station and board the express for Kolozsvár where she would be met by Ilonka. I was extremely happy, this was the perfect solution. Ilonka was happy too. She liked Éva very much. After a week, I received a letter from Ilonka saying that Éva did not show up at Kolozsvár, but I shouldn't worry, because she went to Temesvár and was fine. I subsequently learned that our solution was an issue discussed by a meeting and "voted down" as unsatisfactory. After the war I also learned from Ilonka that when Éva failed to meet her at the station, she went to Váradi a few days later for her. But she did not see Éva, only a man called Alfonz Weisz, who told her that Éva had gone to Temesvár. Satisfied, Ilonka went home and wrote her reassuring letter. Meanwhile Éva was still alive, there in Nagyvárad, held in the same house, in the next room perhaps, and was prevented from seeing Ilonka.

Éva, my darling Éva, what did you feel knowing that you could go with Ilonka, whom you also liked very much, and live, yet you must die. Your accursed, a thousand limes accursed, scheming murderers blocked every course open to her, because that's what they decided. And You, in your pureness of heart and naiveness, believed that you were carrying out a "party decision." Oh God, what great things you could have accomplished with your fervent spirit in the name of a worthy Cause!

A few days after Ilonka Mráz wrote the above letter, a short letter, Éva's last, arrived to Tibi's place of work. Someone must have dropped it through the open window since there was no stamp or address on the envelope. It contained only a few lines and I remember one sentence exactly:

"Don't write for a while, take care, I'm fine at all times..." Éva

How could I have known that it was a farewell letter. Very likely, the "postman" was Levente-Nyuszi (Bunny) (there'll be more about him later), who was looking for days for a "suitable" place in the woods of Debrecen, and when he found it, he prepared a mixture of cyanide and water and gave it to Evotto drink.

Subsequently, I looked up in a dictionary what exactly cyanuric acid was. Then one night I had a dream in which I was surrounded by mountains of cyanide crystals and water was rushing toward me, and I was trying desperately to prevent them from mixing.

The shelling by Russians and the Romanian army, which had changed sides, over the following weeks drove people literally under ground. We dared to come out for fresh air, food, and water only during the night. During this time, two of my friends, Olga Dickman from Kolozsvár (who emigrated to Brazil later and I lost track of her) and Cilike Singer from Komárom (who died recently here in Israel as I learned a short while ago) ran away from Pest and sought refuge with me. They stayed with me until the liberation in the Baloghs' house, or rather in the underground shelter. By then things became so chaotic that people could think only of themselves, so they were safe. Liberation was in the air and we knew that we only had to survive a few more days or hours.

Mostly Romanian soldiers occupied that part of Mátyásföld where we lived, which made things easier for us because we could communicate with them. From one day to the next we

became important mediators between the army and the population. There were some who asked us to invite the soldiers into their homes in order to feel safer, and there were some who worried about their daughters' honor. One "dishonored girl," a blue-eyed blonde beauty, told her parents that she would never leave her "assailant" but follow him to the ends of the earth if she must. Many Romanian-Hungarian friendships were made this way, but aside from these "incidents," the centuries old Romanian-Hungarian hatred continued to rage.

Meanwhile, my brother, no longer hiding, managed to procure a military truck, and together with Romanian soldiers and my two girlfriends we drove into Budapest. The road to Pest seemed literally paved with bodies.

After many difficulties we finally arrived in Pest. There was chaos everywhere. Some people were happy, others were scared depending on their attitudes and past conduct. The lack of food only exacerbated the chaos. It was dangerous to walk on the streets because of the many Russians soldiers who were after watches and love. The words "davay tchas" and "idyi suda barishnya" were soon well known. Furthermore, one could be shot by guns fired from windows and aimed at Russian soldiers.

We looked up friends, we were infinitely happy to see Magdi again in whose apartment we, and many others who had no place to go to, lived until we left Budapest.

We went to a number of peace demonstrations hailing the Soviets, and marched ecstatically to the rally welcoming Rákosi and his comrades.

Meanwhile *we* met with other Transylvanians and "on the spur of the moment" founded "The Transylvanian Anti-Fascist Alliance." We issued membership cards and set the goal of supporting Transylvanians and helping them to return to their homes.

My brother and I left Budapest on the first broken-down train because we were anxious to find out what happened to our loved ones. I remember that it was a very long journey. In Debrecen the train was shunted for long hours. Debrecen, a city where I thought of many things except that a short time before profane hands indifferently shoveled earth on the *lii'elcss* body of my beloved sister at an unknown place.

We arrived at Nagyvárad during the night and I waited anxiously for daylight to find out where Éva was. First thing in the morning I went to the office of the already legal youth organization and asked to see Alfonz Weisz. Soon we stood face to face.

"Where's Éva?" I asked.

"Éva's no more," he answered laconically. I thought he was making a bad joke.

"What do you mean, Éva's no more?"

"Just that. Éva's no more."

I still couldn't understand what he was saying, yet my head began to spin, I held onto a desk and instinctively began to cry.

"What? A Marxist crying?" asked a by then faceless voice.

I looked uncomprehendingly at him. It never occurred to me that Marxists were forbidden to cry, laugh, or do anything expressing human feelings.

It then began to dawn on me that Éva lived among monsters, (...so that was why "mushiness" wasn't allowed in our letters...)

"What happened to Éva?"

He answered matter-of-factly like a good "Marxist" would: "Éva wanted to cross the border illegally to get to Temesvár and the borderguards shot her."

No, I just couldn't accept the thought that Éva was dead.

"Perhaps they just wounded her and she's alive somewhere?"

"No, Éva's not alive," was the cruel, confident answer.

Staggering, I left the room with a single thought pounding in my brain: ...Éva's no more...Éva's no more... I would never tell her about the many things that happened to me, and I would never learn what she went through during the weeks, days, hours before her, as we were to learn, horrible death.

How come Éva's no more? I kept asking myself: what makes them so sure she wasn't just wounded, but w<sup>f</sup>as dead? Who saw her at the scene of her death? I couldn't get the idea out of my head that they were not telling me the truth.

By then I was in Szatmár with only my brother-in-law, Piri's husband. No one else from my family survived. My beloved Mother, MRS ANTAL IZSÁK, neé ESZTER KAIN, my beloved sisters and brother, MARGIT, SÁRI, PIRI, and SÁNDOR, little ROBI (I have not included my sister Rózsi since she emigrated to South America as a young girl and died in Israel in 1969), forgive me if my painful longing after Éva perhaps overshadowed my mourning for you. I found the box with the family documents and pictures buried in the garden of our house and covered the walls of my room with them. They were there for years. But my heart ached truly and forever for Éva.

Recalling that I was not going to get a proper explanation, I filed a request with party organs and state functionaries for an official investigation of her death. Lajos Weisz, the head of Siguranca at the time and a friend of my family who had known Éva since she was a child (he was one of those who came to our house even- night to listen to broadcasts from London and Moscow), in his official capacity and as a private person put all his energy into the investigation. He uncovered an unbeliÉvable story which may be one of its kind.

It confirmed my suspicion. Éva was not shot at the border, but literally driven to her death. Her murderers conceived a most horrible, bloodcurdling form of death for her.

**These are the facts:** During her stay in Nagyvárad, Éva was, unfortunately, drawn into a circle of so-called "comrades," which instead of striving to survive by protecting and helping one another, wasted time on philosophizing. A man called Imre Liebschitz was the "brains" behind the group, who, by right of his alleged intellectual superiority and probably age, used psychological terror to rule over a rather large group of well-meaning young people who saw him as the embodiment of the Communist Party. What he said was always "right," therefore, they blindly believed whatever he said and obeyed his "orders," which he always presented to them as top-level instruction. Liebschitz's wife, Éva Révész, was the number two "ideologist," and this "Marxist couple" claimed a monopoly over life and death. Consequently, when Éva's place of residence was no longer safe and every possible solution was rejected or thwarted, the

Liebschitz couple proposed suicide as the only way out. After Liebschitz proved by theoretical deduction that the "proposal" was the only correct "solution," it was put to vote. And the "cell" adopted the proposal with a binding force. When Éva asked if there might be some other solution, perhaps to move in with me in Pest, they told her that it was not enough to pass a resolution, it must also be carried out. Then they worked out in detail the method and location of the execution of the resolution with "Marxist objectivity." They found a way to procure the cyanide and also found someone in Debrecen, who would take Éva back with him and carry out the murder in Nagyerdő. The only thing they did not want to find was a way for Éva to stay alive. It would have been so simple to escort her to me in Pest, just a few kilometers away from Debrecen, or to Ilonka in Kolozsvár. All this was planned and carried out in the name of Marxism. With precision and cold-blooded "party discipline." That man, Levente Nyuszi—it's painful to even recall his name, and I never wanted to see him—went to Várad from Debrecen, and took Éva back with him to Debrecen, stripped of everything she owned, then he spent days looking for a "suitable" place in Nagyerdő. And Éva, poor, tormented Éva, waited for days for him to find that place; and deep inside she was probably waiting for some miracle that would save her life, but it was hopeless. Every course leading to the miracle was closed to her. And so, at the given moment she was compelled to take the poison bringing certain death. Her last words, that will forever shake me, were: Why don't you get it over with.

This is how Éva died.

## **POSTSCRIPT**

All the names and information in my writing are real. Wherever I used initials, it was by intention. The dates may not be all correct, since I could not always remember the precise day of the events.

I wrote the words without any deliberation, as they poured forth from my memory. I have probably left out many things, but it would have been impossible to put down so many events, worries, hopes (of which we had the least), and, most of all, losses, on just a few pages. For this reason, there may be gaps and reiterations in the story, and repeated references to the same person or event.

I cannot make any corrections, put the flow of events in order, or stylize what I have written, anymore than I can change my innermost thoughts and feelings. It stands as I remember.

The Reader may—perhaps correctly—observe a note of pathos or subjectivity now and then in what I have written. However, the facts, the hard facts are objective.

For forty years I guarded my loss almost jealously, I did not share it with anyone. But time is running out and I am counting the years left to me. I find the thought inci-easingly hard to bear that with the end of my life I shall lock Éva's memory, the story of her short life and tragic death, forever inside. This is why I began to write. It lifted the heavy feeling in my heart.

**A memorial of words...**

**April 1984, Raanana, Israel**

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**The following are a verbatim copy of the original text of the records of the hearings conducted at the Political Department of the Siguranca in Nagyvárad on June 18 and 19, 1945:**

**State Police Nagyvárad Political Department**

**Record**

**Recorded in Nagyvárad at the Political Department of the State Police on June 18, 1945.**

**Present:** Lajos Czeller, head of the Siguranta at Police Headquarters in Nagyvárad, Lajos Weisz, head of Siguranta in Satu-Mare, and Erzsébet Grünfeld, official of the State Police in Nagyvárad, as clerk.

**Summoned to appear:**

**Alfonz Weisz**, lathe worker, lives at Október 12 utca 60, Nagyvárad; born on 8 May 1925 in Bukarest; father's name: Jenő Weisz, mother's name: Amália Pászka; single, propertiless, declares to have no criminal record. His answers to my questions are as follows:

**When did you meet Éva Izsák?**

I met Éva Izsák in April 1944, Éva Izsák came over to Nagyvárád from Szatmár.

**Under what circumstances and who introduced you to Éva Izsák?**

Béla Nádler summoned me to his apartment on Hodosi Miklós utca in Nagyvárád, I found a strange lady in his company in his apartment, Éva Izsák was the person he introduced.

**Why did Béla Nádler summon you?**

Béla Nádler, with whom I had a friendly relationship, summoned me to help him to find accommodations to hide Éva Izsák.

**Did you agree to hide Éva Izsák?**

Yes, I agreed.

**What was your role in finding accommodations for Éva Izsák and where did you put her up?**

I wanted to arrange Éva Izsák's accommodations with the mediation of comrades, I went to György Grünstein who was my friend and comrade. The result of our discussion was that we will try to put up Éva, our comrade, at Ödön Wetternek's, a local resident.

**Who took Éva Izsák to the Wetterneks?**

Comrade Rudolf Wetternek took comrade Éva to his apartment.

**How come it was Wetternek who took her when it was Grünstein you discussed it with?**

We discussed the possible accommodations at Grünstein's apartment and I went to comrade Nádler's apartment, where comrade Wetternek was also present. I told him about our discussion, that is, our decision, and asked him to take her to their apartment.

**Tell us the exact date when Éva Izsák was taken to the Wetterneks, and who took her there?**

In April 1944, I don't remember the exact day, comrade Rudolf Wetternek took comrade Éva to Bartos's apartment from the Nádlers. I don't remember exactly who took Éva there,

Wetternek or I.

**Who were the Bartoses? And how is it that you don't remember who took Éva there?**

The Bartoses were my father's old acquaintances, in fact, he thought of them as his comrades. I can only repeat that I don't remember exactly, but it seems to me, it may have been me who took Éva to the Bartoses.

**What explanation did you give the Bartoses for taking Éva there?**

The explanation I gave to the Bartoses for taking Éva to them was that my father was being taken to the ghetto, Éva was my mother's niece who was not yet registered at the police and I didn't want any trouble for her or for myself. I asked them to let our relative, Éva, stay with them.

**How did the Bartoses take your request?**

The Bartoses did not take to my request too well, but declared that for the time being, until my father was in the ghetto, they will let her stay with them.

**How long did Éva live at the Bartoses?**

She lived at the Bartoses for about 10 days.

**Where did Éva move from the Bartoses?**

From the Bartoses she was moved to the Wetterneks by Ödön (Rudi) Wetternek as his fiancée. Ödön Wetternek told his parents that she had just arrived from Szatmár.

**How long did Éva live at the Wetterneks?**

Éva lived at the Wetterneks for about 3 months.

**How did the Wetterneks react to Éva?**

The Wetterneks weren't particularly pleased to have Éva, especially not Kati, Ödön's sister, who made hysterical scenes and kept saying that a strange woman was planted on them. She also suspected that it wasn't true that Rudi had a fiancée.

**How do you know that the Wetterneks had arguments about Éva?**

I was a daily guest at the Wetternek home, I saw that Kad disapproved of Éva's presence.

**What form did Kati's outbursts against Éva take?**

There were days when Kati didn't speak to Éva at all and she locked herself in and cried.

**In your opinion, what was the cause of Kati's antipathy?**

I think that she probably knew that Éva was a Jew and that she wasn't Rudi's fiancée. For this reason, she took every opportunity to have Éva thrown out. Another reason may have been the fact that Éva could not adapt well enough, which increased Kati's antipathy for her.

**Where did Éva move from the Wetterneks and who helped her to move?**

She moved from the Wetterneks to Jenő Kerekes, who resided at Teglaveto utca 60 in Nagyvárád, he is my uncle and I lived with them too. Since she could no longer stay at the Wetterneks because of Kati, we agreed that she would move to my uncle's place, that is, to us.

**What did you tell the Kerekeses about moving Éva there?**

Comrade Rudi and I asked my uncle to let Rudi's fiancée (stay) live at my uncle's for a while until Rudi's sister, who had scarlet fever, gets well. I wish to note that we talked this over beforehand.

**How did the Kerekeses react to Éva?**

The Kerekeses reacted with friendliness.

**Did the Kerekeses realize that Éva was a Jew?**

They did not openly show whether or not they had recognized her Jewish origin.

**How long did Éva live at the Kerekeses?**

About 3-4 weeks.

**Where did Éva move from the Kerekeses and who helped her to move?**

A comrade called Nyuszi took Éva to Debrecen from the Kerekeses.

**What was comrade Nyuszi's real name?**

I can't remember his real name, it may have been Pelczel, or Levente, perhaps Levente.

**Who were your contacts with Nyuszi?**

I met him through Imre Liebschitz and Éva Révész.

**Who were Imre Liebschitz's and Éva Révész's acquaintances?**

They were comrades who were living underground in Nagyarad.

**Who introduced the said persons to you?**

György Grünstein and Gábor Vajda introduced Liebschitz and Éva Révész to me.

**Were you introduced as friends or as comrades?**

We were introduced as comrades.

**What instructions did you get from your comrades concerning Imre Liebschitz and Éva Révész?**

To be supportive.

**In what way and in what things did you help the said persons?**

In finding apartments, contacting comrades. Generally, I did everything they requested. For example, I acquired false documents for them.

**What kind of false documents did you acquire for the said persons?**

I obtained the birth certificate of a person called László Banki, his grandparents' ID papers from the police. I obtained stamped, blank baptismal certificates and identification papers in László Banfi's name.

**Describe Imre Liebschitz and Éva Révész?**

In my opinion and according to my comrades, Imre Liebschitz was a very educated, well-trained, very knowledgeable individual, a fourth year university student of physics and chemistry, he said. I wish to note that my foregoing observations were what I believed at the

time. Éva Révész is an ideologically well-trained Marxist.

**Describe your contacts with Liebschitz and Éva Révész.**

I usually met. Éva Révész in the evening after work and discussed with her the day's events, the most urgent tasks.

**What were these urgent tasks?**

Correspondence with comrades in the Jewish labor battalions (MUSZ), the acquisition of papers.

**What other persons were in Liebschitz's and Éva Révész's company?**

Me, Ödön Wetternek, Dániel Csatóri, and later Éva Izsák.

**Did anyone else other than the said persons attend your discussions?**

Yes, they came from Debrecen.

**Who came from Debrecen? Name them.**

Zoltán Rácz, Mrs Zoltán Rácz, Nyuszi. I don't know about others, but I assume that others also came, only they met in secret.

**What was the subject of your discussion?**

Different Marxist literature.

**Did comrade Nyuszi take part in your meetings?**

When he was in Nagyvárád.

**How many times was he in Nagyvárád?**

He came at intervals of three or four weeks, about five or six times altogether, I don't remember exactly.

**Was Éva Izsák present at all the meetings?**

No.

**About how many times was Éva Izsák absent?**

I don't remember.

**Why did Nyuszi take Éva Izsák with him to Debrecen?**

Imre Liebschitz, Éva Révész, Alfonz Weisz, Ödön Wetternek (Rudi), Dániel Csatóri, Zoltán Rácz, Nyuszi, Gábor Vajda, all of us agreed with the decision that Éva Izsák must commit suicide. Our comrade Nyuszi was assigned with its execution, he took Éva with him to Debrecen to execute the suicide. Gábor Vajda did not personally participate in our meetings, because he was in hiding in a village near Miskolc, I only heard that he also knew about it.

**Who proposed that Éva Izsák must commit suicide?**

It was Imre Liebschitz who proposed that Éva Izsák must commit suicide.

**What was the reason he gave?**

After we examined all possibilities for a temporary place for her to stay and after we did not find a suitable place where we could hide her, he pointed out that Éva's arrest would lead to the arrest of 20-25 people.

**What were the chances of Éva Izsák's arrest?**

First of all, her papers were not in order. She couldn't adapt to her environment, her looks betrayed her.

**To your knowledge what papers did Éva have?**

A birth certificate, shopping coupons, [?] a Szatmár registration form, there were also others, but I don't remember them.

**What name were they made out to? Her own, or were they Christian papers?**

The name was Mária Ari, a Protestant.

**The documents you have listed were entirely satisfactory.**

If they could have been used.

**Why couldn't the papers be used?**

While she lived at the Wetterneks, registration was not important because it was a Volksbund house.

**Why couldn't you find a place so she could be registered? The bureaus were open...**

She didn't have an apartment.

**Why didn't you acquire local documents for Éva Izsák? You had the means.**

We couldn't get the papers that would have been necessary.

**You have mentioned earlier that you got stamped, blank birth certificates and identification papers.**

I did not get registration forms, and the papers I did get were sent to Debrecen while Éva was living with the Wetterneks and she did not need them at the time.

**Éva could have traveled anywhere with the papers she had without any problems, why didn't you send her to her sister in Pest?**

True, Éva could have traveled to Pest with her papers, we contacted her sister, asking her to find accommodations for Éva because we were unable to find a place for her, and she answered by return telegram that she would send for her, but in effect this did not happen.

**We have information that a telegram was sent to Éva, instructing her to go to Kolozsvár from Pest via Varad, and that Ilonka was meeting her at the station.**

Éva did not go to Kolozsvár because Lajcsi Mráz was arrested and, as I heard, Ilus was also under surveillance.

**Who was the telegram delivered to?**

To me, it was delivered to my apartment.

**Who did you tell about the contents of the telegram?**

Rudolf Wetternek, Éva Révész, Imre Liebschitz, and, if I remember correctly, Csátári also knew about it. Éva Izsák also knew.

**Why didn't you just give the telegram to Éva Izsák?**

I gave it to her, but as with everything, in general, before I handed anything over, or before we did anything, or when we received something, it had to be checked by the other comrades.

**What was your and your comrades' objection to the instructions Éva's sister gave?**

If I remember correctly, only on the fact that Mrs Mráz was under surveillance.

**How did you know that Mrs Mráz was under surveillance?**

If I remember correctly, Liebschitz and Révész told me.

**Where did Liebschitz and Révész get their information?**

Probably from Gábor Vajda.

**Gábor Vajda did not know the Mrázes in Kolozsvár at all.**

I definitely know that he knew Lajcsi Mráz as well as his wife. I saw them talking together, for example, in the social-democratic party too.

**Where did you see them talk, in which social-democratic party?**

On the party premises on Kapucinus utca in 1943-1944.

**Tell us how Éva was taken away.**

After Imre Liebschitz told her the decision, she took the 7 o'clock train to Debrecen with Nyuszi.

**What became of Éva later?**

We learned a few weeks later, after Nyuszi returned, that Éva took the poison in Nagyerdő in Nyuszi's presence.

**What did Nyuszi report to you and your associates?**

He told us that she spent a few days at their apartment until he looked around for a place where they would execute the suicide.

**Tell us in detail what your associate, Nyuszi, reported.**

Nyuszi told us that when they went to Nagyerdő, they looked for a deserted place where no one ever goes, he had the water with him and then Éva took the poison when it was growing dark already. Nyuszi told Éva that it would be over in a few moments. After Éva drank it, Éva was so strong and brave that she even asked Nyuszi when would it be over, but she couldn't finish the sentence, because she collapsed, made a rattling sound, and Nyuszi, allegedly, closed her mouth which was foaming. If I remember correctly, afterward he carried Éva a little deeper into the woods, then left. Then, I don't know how many days later, a schoolchild found Éva. It was in the Debrecen newspapers which Nyuszi brought along with him.

**What was in the article?**

If I remember correctly, it said that they had found the body of a probably Jewish girl who was hiding, and perhaps had a heartattack. It appeared in two or three editions.

**How did you react to Nyuszi's report?**

I was an insignificant member of the group, Imre Liebschitz asked Nyuszi some questions: was there a picture, was she recognized. On the whole, we all asked something. Imre Liebschitz scolded Nyuszi for taking his time.

**I ask again, how did you and your associates react to Éva's execution?**

I, for my part, asked, if I remember correctly, how Éva had behaved. Then Nyuszi told us the above.

**Don't start repeating yourself, what was your reaction to Éva's death, were you satisfied by her death?**

Imre Liebschitz and the others were satisfied, for my part, I did not feel satisfied.

**Why didn't you direct Éva Izsák to another city and why did you insist she die?**

The only other city was Pest, and, to be precise, the name of some village also came up. I went to Marika Elmer asking if she could help us, then she tried in the village where her sister lived, it seemed that perhaps she might be able get work for Éva at the office of the notary, but later Marika Elmer had second thoughts about whether she would be able to adjust on her own,

without help, to society, to the village notability.

**To my knowledge there are about 80 or 90 cities and several thousand villages in Hungary, why did you insist on 1 or 2 cities and one village?**

Because we had no contacts elsewhere.

**According to my information, Éva Izsák was one of the leaders of the Transylvanian movement, and had contacts not only in Transylvania but also in most parts of the mother country.**

She didn't have all that many contacts, else she would have certainly mentioned them.

**Éva fell into your hands, she recognized the danger but could not escape.**

I deny that I had any intention of betraying her or the comrades.

**What reports did you receive about the measures taken by the Gestapo?**

I deny that I had any contacts, or that I knew that my comrades, or any one of them had contacts with the Gestapo, because then that one traitor among us would have betrayed us.

**What reports did you receive about the measures taken by the Volksbund?**

None, to my knowledge.

**Did you receive reports from anyone about the Volksbund meetings?**

In 1943, the comrades working in the underground movement in Várad asked Rudolf Wetternek to go to the Volksbund since his father keeps harassing him about it anyway, and report who were the people there and what was going on there in general.

**How many reports did Ödön prepare for you?**

I don't remember exactly how many times he reported about what's going on there, because he reported in private conversations and not in writing.

**Tell us about Bela Nádler.**

I have known Béla Nádler since elementary school. We became friends at the engineering

vocational school in 1940-41. Rudi also went to the same school. Later, at the end of 1942, I think, we met György Grünstein , who introduced us to his associates.

**What happened to Béla Nádler during the ghettoization?**

During the ghettoization he dug a grave for himself in the cemetery where he would hide, and where he did hide. Later, when the gendarmes combed the cemetery, they took him to the ghetto. Allegedly, the neighbors reported that they saw a light in his apartment during the night.

**According to my information, you were nearby when Béla Nádler was caught.**

I saw that Béla Nádler was caught. I was coming out of the ghetto when I saw the gendarmes taking him into the ghetto.

**Who was with you when the gendarmes caught Nádler?**

When I first slipped out of the ghetto riding a bicycle, I called Rudolf Wetternek from a pastry shop to come and help me get back into the ghetto.

**Was Wetternek present when Béla Nádler was taken inside by the gendarmes?**

We were together when we saw that they took Béla Nádler inside, we were standing in front of the gates of the ghetto.

**Then why did you have to call Wetternek for help if you were together?**

It was around 2 o'clock in the afternoon when I called him and asked him come and wait for me in front of the Kovács bicycle shop. We went to the ghetto together to wait for a transport which I would join and get back into the ghetto.

**According to my information, Éva was sent off with only the dress she was wearing, what happened to Éva's belongings?**

Éva did go to Debrecen without a bag. Her suitcase with her clothes was left behind in Jenő Kerekes's home where we lived until we also moved out. Then—if I remember correctly—they were taken to Rudi's place, and Imre Liebschitz asked to have her coat because he didn't have one.

**According to my information, Éva brought with her her parents' and her sister's damask bed linen and other valuables. Tell us exactly, who took them?**

[She brought] a suitcase (yellow) and other female things to us, to Jenő Kerekes's apartment. I did not see damask tablecloths or any other things.

**What remained at your place that belonged to Éva?**

The contents of the suitcase, clothes, a woman's winter coat, which Éva Révész took away, fountainpens, her small watch and small things, shoes, lingerie.

**What did you keep?**

The above things, except the suitcase.

**What did the Wetterneks take?**

I don't know exactly, he has the suitcase and a watch.

**Why didn't you return the things to Éva Izsák's sister?**

Berger, who, I think, came from Kolozsvár, looked me up, and I asked him if he was going to take everything away, and he said that until Mancsi was in this condition, it would not be a good idea to take them, because they would remind her of Éva. So he only took a few things.

**Why did you distort the story of Éva's disappearance, which could no longer be kept secret anyway, why did you tell Mancsi Izsák a nursery tale?**

When Mancsi Izsák appeared, I was at the KISZ [Communist Youth Federation] office. Salzberger, who knew about it, was also there and I asked him if in his opinion we should tell her then or later. He told me to send for Imre Liebschitz, but we knew that this would not satisfy her, so until the time we told her truth, we would say that Éva was caught trying to escape to Romania.

**I have information that you and Wetternek agreed what your testimony would be if there was to be an investigation.**

I have already said yesterday that Wetternek and I discussed it.

**For how long did you stay in contact with your old associates after the Red Army's arrival?**

When the Red Army arrived, we moved into a collective apartment, where we were joined by Jenő Salzberger, Ferenc Lőrincz, István Sorik-Weisz. Later, Éva Fried also moved in. Since the Liebschitzes had an opportunity to return to Debrecen, they left about 2 months later.

**How often did you visit Liebschitz, Éva Révész, Nyuszi, and the others?**

I went across the border in the matter of movies three times I think. I visited Dániel Csatári, then Éva Révész and Liebschitz. I did not see Nyuszi then nor since.

**According to my information, you and your associates received precise instructions what you should testify in case of an investigations, and these instructions were given by Imre Liebschitz.**

I don't know about any instructions in case of an investigation.

**After the Red Army arrived, did you and Liebschitz discuss Éva's death in any detail?**

We had no intention of concealing the truth, as Liebschitz himself told the party secretary Miklós Gyarmati at the time.

**When you told Éva Izsák that she must commit suicide, how did Éva react?**

She asked if there was some other way, and Imre Liebschitz pointed out that there was no other solution and that what we prove theoretically, like Imre Liebschitz's theory, we must also realize in practice, so she had to do it.

**During the first hearing you stated that Éva begged you to find another solution.**

I do not recall having said that she begged, because Éva behaved so well that I, myself, was surprised that she raised, that is, asked if we had examined every possibility.

**Why didn't you ask Mancsi Izsák even after three months to turn to the Party for an investigation of the case?**

In my autobiography for the party I described the case and several party members also

knew about it. Before Manczi Izsák came to Varad, I told Rudi that we would tell Manczi to have Imre Liebschitz arrested.

**You and Liebschitz decided Éva's fate together, therefore, you're an accomplice, just as Liebschitz is.**

I, too, was under Liebschitz's influence and now I'm convinced that he was wrong.

**Why didn't you report what you've just said to Manczi Izsák, who, to my knowledge, is the province secretary of U.T.C.[?] and your immediate superior?**

I was waiting for the investigation by the party and wanted to tell her then.

**Did the party start an investigation of this case?**

I asked about it several times, but I don't know whether or not they started it.

**Who did you report it to in the party?**

To the comrade who was our contact between the party and the Communist Youth Federation, Jend Salzberger.

**What else do you know about this case?**

To my knowledge, after the Red Army arrived, Imre Liebschitz went from Várád to Debrecen where he planned to do important work for the party, but afterward—as I heard—he had a general breakdown, because they pointed out there—very correctly—that a theory cannot be imposed just like that, but I don't think he made any real effort to correct his faults, because I don't think it was by accident that his wife, Éva Révész, divorced him.

**Do you have anything else to say?**

Yes.

**What else do you have to say?**

Those comrades who sent me to Imre Liebschitz and Éva Révész told me at the time that he was one of the best trained men and that I should take every opportunity to support them and at the same time to learn from them. When I became acquainted with them, this was my

impression too, because compared to them I knew very little. In other words, when they expressed an opinion which they also proved by their propositions, we, as "promising communists," had to accept it, otherwise we were told that we had petit bourgeois limitations. Under these circumstances we regarded them as comrades who must have the correct view of things due to their knowledge. They called us idiots, because of our lack of training and we had to accept their opinion. This was why, in my opinion, Éva Izsák submitted herself to the decision, because she was with us in this and her opinion of them was the same as ours. And when Imre Liebschitz told us on the banks of the Körös [River] that we must also commit suicide, we would have obeyed just as she did, but then he laughed to show that it was just a "test" to see whether or not we would submit.

**What was your relationship with Éva Izsák?**

I had sexual relations with her.

Lajos Czeller, in his own hand Head of Siguranta in Nagyvárad

Lajos Weisz, in his own hand Head of Siguranta in Satu-Maare

Clerk:

Erzsébet Grünfeld

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**Police Headquarters, Nagyvárad Political Department**

**RECORD OF THE HEARING**

**Recorded in Nagyvárad on June 18, 1945, at the Political Department of the City Police Headquarters.**

**Present:** Lajos Czeller, Head of Siguranta at Police Headquarters in Nagyvárad, Lajos Weisz, Head of Siguranta in Satu-Mare, and Erzsébet Grünfeld, official of the State Police in Nagyvárad, as clerk.

**Summoned to appear:**

**Ödön Wetternek**, residing at Csengeri út 15, Nagyvárad, born in Óbesenyő (Temes-Torontál county) on Oct. 1, 1925, father's name: Rezső Wetternek, mother's name: Teréz Jung, unpropertied, single, has not done military service, declares to have no criminal record.

You are warned to tell the truth, testifying to misleading or other untrue fact incurs severe punishment under the law.

He gave the following answers to my questions:

**When did you meet Éva Izsák?**

I met Éva Izsák in the winter of 1944.

**Under what circumstances did you meet her and who introduced her to you?**

I traveled to Szatmárnémeti where Béla Nádler introduced Éva Izsák to me. We talked for one hour, because she was lying sick in bed.

**Who was Béla Nádler, describe him.**

He was my classmate, later we went to work together and began to work in the movement together.

**When did you join the underground movement?**

In 1942, when I joined Alfonz Weisz's cell.

**How did you come to know Alfonz Weisz and describe him:**

Through Béla Nádler and we also went to the same school. Alfonz Weisz enlisted me into his cell, brought books, talked about capitalism and about the workers' state system.

**Why did you go to Szatmár?**

I wanted to visit Béla Nádler and [ask him] to come home if it was possible.

**Did Béla Nádler go with you or stay in Szatmár?**

I don't know exactly, once he came home with me, another time he didn't.

**Can you tell us why you traveled from Várada to Szatmár to visit Béla Nádler?**

In order to visit him, because his mother asked me to.

**Who covered the cost of your Szatmár trip?**

I did.

**How many times in all did you go to Szatmár and who did you meet there?**

I went to Szatmár twice. I met Éva Izsák, Mancsi Izsák, Sándor Izsák, their mother and three more of their sisters.

**Were people who lived underground introduced to you in Szatmár?**

No. I wish to add to the previous question that I also met the following people in Szatmár: Magda Berkó and Tibor Kolb.

**Did you carry orders to Szatmár and, if so, what were they?**

I did not carry official orders, only Béla Nádler's verbal instructions to take Éva Izsák away from there.

**How could you carry Béla Nádler's instructions when he was in Szatmár too?**

Béla Nádler returned home before I left and gave me his instructions then.

**To my previous question as to why you traveled to Szatmár, you testified that you went to visit Béla Nádler.**

The first time I went to visit Béla Nádler, the second time I went for Éva Izsák.

**Why did you take Éva Izsák with you?**

To save her from the ghetto.

**Did Éva ask you to?**

Éva Izsák did not ask me to, only Béla Nádler and Éva Izsák discussed the thing, which Béla Nádler told me when he returned.

**What did Béla Nádler tell you?**

Béla Nádler told me the following: it is imperative that we save Éva Izsák from being taken to the ghetto, since she's a valuable comrade and sickly, she wouldn't survive the ghetto.

**What were Béla Nádler's instructions concerning Éva Izsák?**

To go to Szatmárnémeti, where she would be waiting for me, ready to leave.

**Did you go to Szatmárnémeti?**

Yes.

**Tell us about your stay in Szatmárnémeti.**

When I arrived, I went to Kinizsi Pál utca 64 where Éva Izsák lived. She was already packed, we traveled together with Manci Izsák and Magda Berkó, who were going to Pest, all the way to Érmihályfalva, where we separated.

**When did you and Éva Izsák arrive to Nagyvárád?**

In April 1944, before the ghettoization, when wearing of the Star of David became mandatory.

**Where did you take Éva Izsák?**

To Béla Nádler's.

**When you were traveling with Éva Izsák, what documents did she show you?**

She didn't show any documents, she only said that she had a registration form, a record of employment booklet, a birth certificate. There was nothing else.

**What was the name on the documents? Her own or someone else's?**

The documents were made out to Mária Ari.

**Did the documents show her a Christian?**

They showed her a Christian.

**Did you have to show your papers during the trip?**

No.

**After you brought Éva Izsák to Varad, when did you meet her again?**

Almost everyday at Béla Nádler's apartment.

**Who were present at these meetings?**

Béla Nádler, Alfonz Weisz, Éva Izsák, and I.

**How long did Éva Izsák stay at Béla Nádler's?**

About two weeks, until the ghettoization began.

**Where did Béla Nádler and Éva Izsák live?**

On Méliusz Juhász Péter utca at his grandfather's.

**Where did Éva Izsák move from Béla Nádler?**

To my place at Csengeri utca 15.

**Who moved her there?**

I did.

**Tell us how you moved her.**

I went down to the Bartoses after Alfonz Weisz showed me where they lived, Éva packed her things and I took her to our place.

**How did Éva get to the Bartoses?**

Alfonz Weisz took her to the Bartoses from the Nádlers.

**You said in your previous answer that you moved her from the Nádlers.**

The previous answer was incorrect, because I have forgotten that Alfonz Weisz took Éva Izsák to the Bartoses.

**How long did Éva Izsák stay at the Bartoses?**

2 or 3 days as far as I know.

**Tell us who the Bartoses were?**

They were some relatives of Alfonz Weisz.

**Which party were the Bartoses members of?**

I can't fully answer that, because I did not know them before. It was only when Alfonz Weisz and I went there that I introduced myself to the Bartoses in passing and was on my way with Éva Izsák.

**Where did you and Éva Izsák go from the Bartoses?**

To our home at Csengeri utca 15.

**Did you live alone or with your parents?**

I lived with my parents.

**What did you tell your parents when you took Éva Izsák there?**

I told my father that I knew Éva well and also her brother who was at the front, that she had no father or mother. I told him that she was close to me and that I wanted to help her by having her stay with us for a few months, because she was sick.

**How did your parents take your explanation?**

My parents, that is, my father accepted it without a word.

**Did the rest of your family also accept your explanation?**

My mother is unaccountable in this respect, because she has a nervous ailment, but my sister accepted it.

**How long did Éva Izsák stay with you?**

Until about the end of August 1944.

**From when until when?**

From about the end of May 1944 until the end of August.

**Did anything special happen while Éva Izsák lived with you?**

Only that one of my father's friends in the Volksbund, called Ziegler, began to inquire about her.

**What political party was your father a member of?**

The Volksbund in Nagyvárad.

**What was his office in the Volksbund?**

My father collected membership fees in the Volksbund.

**What political demonstrations and organizations did your father take part in?**

My father worked only for the Volksbund. He was present at every demonstration, every meeting, he even traveled to Nagykaroly to a massive Volksbund demonstration. In the fall of 1944, he traveled to Budapest and volunteered for the SS.

**Did he register you in the Volksbund?**

I think so, yes, he registered the whole family.

**What role did you play in the Volksbund?**

I was not active in the Volksbund. I went only when the comrades sent me to look around and

learn what was going on.

**What did you learn in the Volksbund?**

Who went there, whom we should watch out for perhaps, and whether or not the Gestapo was present.

**Who, in your opinion, were the leading individuals in the Volksbund?**

The leader was Fritsch, there was also Konnerth, Simon (from the Dreher brewery), Quint, Maiport, Beran, Morsaha, Örschleger, Schusztter, Lurtz, Kindler, Strum, Oszkár Richard, Georg Knapp, Teréz Beran, Mrs Beran.

**Who, in your opinion, kept close contact with the Gestapo?**

Fritsch, Strumm, Simon, Ziegler, Oszkár Richard, Lurtz, Schuster, Örschleger, Kindler, Ferenc Hetz.

**How did you come into contact with the Gestapo?**

I had no contact with the Gestapo at all.

**Then how do you know the facts you have mentioned?**

I always saw the said persons in the company of Gestapo officers.

**How did you come to know the Gestapo officers?**

I saw them in the Volksbund.

**How many Volksbund meetings did you attend?**

I did not attend the meetings of the Volksbund, I only went there when they had singing class.

**Did your father know that Éva Izsák was a Jew?**

Not to my knowledge.

**Did the rest of your family know that Éva was a Jew?**

I think my sister found out that Éva was a Jew.

**What led you to believe that your sister found out that Éva was a Jew?**

During the first days already, when the Jews were taken to the ghetto, already then she found out, I think. Later she let us know increasingly that Éva was not a Christian.

**How did your sister behave toward Éva?**

My sister's behavior toward Éva was quite good, it was only later, when ghettoization became total, that there were constant conflicts between them, since Éva did not adapt to my sister's wishes and bourgeois whims.

**Did your sister threaten to report her?**

My sister did not threaten to report her, but two months later she asked me when Éva would leave, because she knew about her, that's all she said.

**When did Éva move out of your apartment?**

She moved to Téglavető utca at the end of August, to Alfonz Weisz who lived at his uncle's together with his mother.

**Who moved, or took her to Alfonz Weisz's uncle?**

I took her to Alfonz Weisz's place.

**Who was Alfonz Weisz's uncle? Describe him.**

When I met József Kerekes, he was working in a restaurant at the station. We didn't really talk to each other, it was Alfonz Weisz who told me that his uncle was a Hungarian fascist.

**What did you and Alfonz Weisz say to explain taking Éva Izsák to his place?**

That my sister had a contagious disease and she would stay for a few weeks until my sister got better.

**How the Kerekes family react to Éva?**

Kerekes expressed his agreement without making any special comment.

**Did Kerekes know your family?**

Kerekes did not know my family, only me and that I was Alfonz Wesz's friend.

**How long did Éva Izsák stay at the Kerekeses?**

About two weeks.

**Where did Éva move from the Kerekeses?**

She went to Debrecen by train with Nyuszi.

**Who was Nyuszi, describe him.**

Éva Révész introduced him to me, saying that he worked with them in Debrecen in the underground movement.

**What was Nyuszi's real name?**

I can't answer this question, because that's how he was introduced.

**Who was Éva Révész, describe her.**

Alfonz Weisz introduced me to Éva Révész, who later held Marxist seminars for the underground.

**Who were present at these Marxist seminars?**

Éva Révész, Alfonz Weisz, and me. Éva Izsák later and Dániel Csatóri when he came in from Bihar.

**Did you have discussions?**

Yes.

**What did you discuss?**

Everybody's situation and Marxist teachings. There were also political discussions.

**Tell us how Nyuszi took Éva to Debrecen and why.**

When we discussed that we could find no solution to the problem of finding accommodations for her, and when Imre Liebschitz proposed that Éva should commit suicide, we also discussed that

it was impossible to do in Nagyvárad, because if her body were discovered, they might put her picture in the newspapers and those who knew her could let the police know who her contacts were, therefore, Debrecen was chosen, that she should commit suicide there. Nyuszi took Éva with him, we escorted her all the way to Main street from where Éva departed for the station with Nyuszi to go to Debrecen.

**You did not mention Liebschitz.**

Imre Liebschitz came to Nagyvárad from Bihar only when Éva Izsák's situation became critical, in order to discuss things, what we were going to do afterward.

**What things did you discuss with Liebschitz?**

We talked about finding accommodations for Éva. Imre Liebschitz, Éva Révész, Zoli Rácz, Nyuszi, Dániel Csatóri, Alfonz Weisz, and I were present, and also Éva Izsák.

**What decision did you make concerning Éva Izsák's accommodation?**

She could no longer come back to us, she could not stay at Alfonz Weisz's uncle, We couldn't send her to Bihar, and according to Nyuszi and Zoli Rácz, there was no place in Debrecen either, Éva Révész could not take her in, so we couldn't find any solution.

**Then why did Nyuszi take her to Debrecen if you couldn't find a place for her?**

Contrary to my previous statement that we could not find any solution for her, Imre Liebschitz was the one who said he had already found a solution. This solution was the following: Éva had to commit suicide, since we could not find a place for her, and because if she were to seek registration, then we, as well as the other comrades in Debrecen and Miskolc would certainly be arrested.

**Did you discuss and decide together that Éva must commit suicide?**

We were all there when we discussed it and decided together that Éva must commit suicide.

**Who proposed that Éva must die?**

Imre Liebschitz.

**Why didn't you send Éva to another city since she had the necessary Christian papers?**

Because it would have meant arrest.

**Did the police issue a warrant for Éva Izsák's arrest?**

No.

**If the police were not looking for her, why were you afraid of arrest?**

Because outside of Debrecen we had not contacts in other cities, and we did not then receive a response to our letter and telegram.

**We have proof that you did in fact receive a telegram saying that Éva could go to Kolozsvár.**

Only Alfonz Weisz met the person who came from Pest later, who was a member of the Rác family, and Alfonz Weisz and the Liebschitzes did not find Kolozsvár a good idea.

**Tell us how Éva was taken away and who made her commit suicide?**

After we finished our discussion, the same day, Alfonz and I escorted Éva to Main Street in the afternoon, where Nyuszi was already waiting for her and they left together for the station to go to Debrecen. She committed suicide with Nyuszi there.

**How much later did Nyuszi tell you about the suicide?**

Two or two and a half weeks later.

**How did he describe the suicide?**

For a few days she stayed at his place, then accompanied him to Nagyerdő in Debrecen where they looked for a place and Éva Izsák took the poison in front of Nyuszi. Also, he brought the newspaper in which it said that a woman of about the age of 25-28 committed suicide in Nagyerdő, who had probably escaped from the ghetto. Children found her, who told the ranger, who reported it to the authorities.

**How did you react to Nyuszi's report?**

Imre Liebschitz said that thing was done, therefore, arrest was not imminent anymore.

**If the police were not looking for her, why did you force her to commit suicide? Why didn't you find some other solution?**

Neither Alfonz Weisz, nor I were able to find a place for her. At the same time, we were dissuaded from having Éva Izsák seek registration.

**Why didn't you have Éva escorted to Kolozsvár? It would have been as safe to go to Kolozsvár as it was to go to Debrecen.**

Alfonz Weisz and the Liebschitzes did not think that her going to Kolozsvár was the solution, since several members of the Mráz family were already arrested, so moving her to an unsafe place would have amounted to sure arrest.

**Who gave up the Mráz family?**

I don't know that.

**When you received the telegram, they were not yet arrested, but they were arrested immediately afterward.**

Alfonz Weisz received the telegram, he knew about the whole thing and the Mráz family in detail.

**Did you show Éva the telegram that you received concerning her?**

The telegram was delivered to the Kerekes home to Alfonz Weisz and he showed it to Éva.

**Tell us about Béla Nádler.**

We went to school together and when we had to leave school for financial reasons, we went to work together, we discussed the faults of the system and generally discussed every problem together. He also brought books which we read together and then discussed. Until finally their situation turned so bad that he went to Budapest with his father in the hope of finding a better job.

**According to my information, Béla Nádler was caught in Nagyvárád after the ghettoization. Tell us in detail what you know about his capture.**

When the ghetto was delimited, he took some food, clothes to a vault saying that he would live

there until the liberation. Alfonz Weisz, Béla Nádler, and I argued that it was an impossible idea, we didn't know how long this situation would last, into the fall certainly and perhaps into the winter too, and it would be impossible to stay there. The following day Alfonz Weisz went into the ghetto to his father, I was waiting for him there when two gendarmes took Béla Nádler into the ghetto. Later we received a letter from him, in which he wrote only that his case was all right, but they would probably take him away from there.

**If you were waiting for Béla Nádler on the scene, how did you avoid being captured?**

I was waiting for Alfom Weis/ in front of the ghetto, but we did not wave to each other and so the gendarmes did not know that we knew each other.

**According to our information, Béla Nádler was also executed.**

In the fall of 1944, I received a letter from him which was addressed from Walsee and in which he wrote that he was working in his profession, but did not know anything about the other members of his family.

**Show us the letters from Béla Nádler,**

They're probably at home.

**How is it possible that your comrades, except the Liebschitzes, with whom you were associated and who were mostly Jewish, were all captured?**

Béla Nádler was caught and Éva Izsák had to commit suicide, the others with whom we were associated were not captured.

**How did you know that Mráz was caught? If you had no contact with him?**

Only Alfonz Weisz can answer that, since I didn't know them.

**How many times did you meet with Liebschitz, Éva Révész, Csatári, Nyuszi, and Zoli Rác after the Red Army arrived?**

I did not see Zoli Rác and Nyuszi. After the Red Army arrived, Imre Liebschitz, Éva Révész, and Dániel Csatári were still here for a while, then later they went over to Debrecen where they continued their work in the movement. I met them about four or five times when I went over to

Debrecen for movies. A few weeks ago Éva Révész and Dániel Csatári were here in Nagyvárád, when I saw them again.

**I have information that you and the Leibschitzes discussed exactly what you would say about Éva's disappearance?**

When the Red Army arrived, we agreed that we would not tell anyone about these things before Manczi Izsák or some relative came to Varad. The first time that Manczi Izsák came, Alfonz Weisz said to me: "I didn't want to upset Manczi Izsák's, what I wanted was to help, for her to readjust to work in the movement, and later, when she would be in a stronger mental state, we would tell her the truth, the way it happened."

**Why did you tell Manczi Izsák that her sister was shot to death while escaping across the border?**

It was Alfonz Weisz who told Manczi Izsák this, I wasn't present, I was on a trip to Kolozsvár for movies. Only when I returned did Alfonz Weisz tell me what he said to her.

**I also have information that you and Alfonz Weisz agreed to say the same thing if you have to testify about Eva Izsák's disappearance when it could not be kept secret anymore.**

In the beginning we discussed how we could tell Manczi Izsák without completely upsetting her.

**In your previous testimony you said that you had no knowledge of how Alfonz Weisz presented Eva's death to Manczi Izsák.**

He did not tell very precisely, and we discussed it only in passing, but when I returned from Kolozsvár, Alfonz Weisz told me what he said in detail to Manczi Izsák.

**I also have information that you and Alfonz Weisz agreed on what you would report to the Party, considering that the matter could not be kept secret anymore.**

We agreed that until Manczi Izsák arrived, we would not tell theeverything, and that when Manczi Izsák arrived and was strong enough to be told, we would ask Manczi to make a report to the Party in order to finally clear up the matter.

**After three months why didn't you ask Manczi Izsák to make the report to the Party?**

When she first came to Nagyvárad and saw Alfonz Weisz, Alfonz Weisz did not tell her the truth, but we decided to tell her when she came the next time. When she came the second time and I also met her, suddenly I didn't feel strong enough either to tell her the truth, however, she said that she would come again the following week and we thought we would clear up the matter then.

**Tell us what else you know about this case.**

It was wrong not to tell Mancsi Izsák the truth immediately when she arrived.

**Is there anything else you want to say?**

I have nothing else to say.

I dictated my testimony to every question contained in the record, which bears my signature and which I uphold.

K.m.f.t.

Signature:

**Ödön Wetternek, in his own hand**

Lajos Czeller, in his own hand Head of Sig., Oradea-Mare

Lajos Weisz, in his own hand Head of Sig., Satu-Mare

Clerk:

Erzsébet Grünfeld, in her own hand

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I have mentioned at the beginning of my writing that a number of my friends read the manuscript of Éva's story. Slomo ben Amnon (Csurilla to his friends) was one of them.

He put his observations on paper and I decided to include this work of an expert psychologist, with a literary value of its own, in the present volume: a beautiful flower in Éva's memory.

Furthermore, I am grateful to Slomo ben Amnon for having translated my writing into Hebrew, which is published simultaneously with the Hungarian version.

This is Csurilla's letter:

**Darling Miriam,**

Here I stand, with head bowed, in front of Chava's memorial built of words...

Our ancestors, who buried their loved ones in the sands of the desert, paused for a moment before the memorial on their way and, murmuring their prayer, lay a stone on the grave. Thus they tried to protect the body from hungry jackals and voracious, vicious hienas...

Chava's body need not be protected like this! The hungry jackals and vicious hienas devoured her in her life while she still smiled...

Nevertheless, I cannot go on my way without putting a colorful stone beside the memorial of words.

I cannot do otherwise, since I knew the actors in this Greek tragedy, who were dressed in modern attire.

I knew comrade Liebschitz-Lakatos who wore the cloak of priests of a religion which preached the love of Man, when he selected the victim and the killer...

I knew Éva Révész, the priestess, who danced in the tunic (winter coat) of the victim in front of believers fooled by empty slogans...

I knew Alfonz Weisz-Várnai, a silently hovering shadow, who was too weak to fight for Chava, but strong enough to raise his arms in blessing over her murderers...

Yes, of course, I also knew the scenes of every act of the tragedy for I lived in Várad until December 1945, and I also knew Nagyerdő in Debrecen.

I did not know Levente-Nyuszi, but then he played a role no more important than the tree which protected from the morning breeze the body of Chava, driven to her death...The others were only minor characters.

I'll start with Alfonz Weisz. He was thirteen when I met him, when he joined the Hásomér Hácáir and I became his madrich (leader). He was a silent child with a bored look on his face. He never argued, nor did he fight for anything. He left the group as unnoticed as he came...

I was his madrich for one and a half years, yet it was only in January 1945 that I first heard his voice. At that time Alfonz Weisz was actively involved in the work of the People's Defense organization, together with Liebschitz/., Kva Rcvész, and others. (I used to go there because of its restaurant and library.)

Finally, in January 1945, I heard Alfonz Weisz's voice. I was hungry, but he came over and chased me out: "Csurilla, get the hell out of here, we don't need Zionist traitors here!!!" Calm and callous, he chased me into the freezing cold of winter...

I did not know then that he voted against life, against Chava, with the same cold, callous motion.

**Imre Liebschitz-Lakatos and Éva Révész.** I was released in October 1944 and two days later I was in Varad. The couple had already achieved leading positions and also occupied high offices in the People's Defense organization. When and if I have the time, I shall write a study about the use of intelligence for negative ends with this couple as the shining example.

I shall never forget the time when I was almost caught, because stupidly I thought I could freely express my opinion, as I had done in my debates with the sliachs of Somer Hacair. Something happened in Várád which greatly enraged me, and with childish naiveness I turned to the Liebschitz-Révész couple. What happened was the following: There lived in Várád an extremely honest Hungarian-Christian communist I knew, called comrade Lévai. Although he was not a Jewish communist, he held the Hásomér Hácáir boys in high esteem. When comrade Lévai heard that the Spanish Republic was about to collapse, he went there to fight to the last. From the Spanish front he went to France, then Yugoslavia, where he fought selflessly for their cause. In December (1944), he returned to Várád to his small family, but enjoyed this peaceful

harmony for only two weeks, when he was arrested as a counter-revolutionary and disappeared forever. I could not resign myself to this and asked the Liebschitz-Révész couple: how was it possible that Hungarian fascists were free to come and go as they pleased, while comrade Lévai, the Freedom Fighter was persecuted?! Their answer was an astonishing piece of ideological acrobatics: Anyone, who was a fascist between 1936-1939, could not have been a Trotskyite traitor, since he was not a Party member. Your LÉvai hiding in the dark was, on the other hand, a Party member! How can you prove that he was not a Trotskyite? The war is not over, the victorious Red Army is still shedding its blood for us. It is our duty to clean up the rear area! Death to traitors like Levai. The high priestess, Éva Révész, added that it would be a smart step to liquidate me too. I was stupid enough to ask them, but not stupid enough not to answer. I explained to them that between the years of 1936-39 I was a Zionist and had never been a Party member. Obviously, I could not have been a Trotskyite traitor either. But I was "chiicpe" enough to also add that it was not me they have to liquidate, but those who were members of the underground Party and as such were suspect of Trotskyism and a threat to ultimate victory.

I don't think I made them happy, but they did leave me alone...

This short, dialog taught me how dangerous a perverted intelligent man could be, who uses his ideological props like a circus performer.

You have written that Chava was the "victim of Hitlerism," and accused his killers of conceiving the "most devious methods" of murder. It's too simple and, to some extent, it reduces the force of the accusation.

What I'm trying to say is: Man is more terrible and cruel than any other animal. There is no other species that kills its own kind. Wolves are called vicious, yet, though they will fight another wolf, they will not kill it. The inhibitive factor in the brains of animals prevents them from killing one of their own species. There are only two species that do not have this inhibitive factor: one is MAN and the other is—and this will come as a surprise—the beautiful, gentle DOVE, held so dear!!! It's not by accident that one murderous species chose another murderous species as its symbol of PEACE...

A tiger kills when its hungry, man kills at all times, in all places... So why and under what conditions did prehistoric man kill? It's very simple: he killed when his rival was the weaker one. But there was also another form of killing, the collective, tribal rite of killing: the

human sacrifice. When those creatures of instinct crawling in mud felt threatened, they knew of only one way to placate the invincible forces: the human sacrifice! They had to appease their angry gods by offering the life of a member of the tribe.

Yes, everything was fine for a good many millenia. The strong killed the weak without giving it a thought, and when the tribe felt threatened, it pulled forth an Iphigenia and simply cut her throat. (The Greeks could not use hydrogen cyanide (HCN) in their rites of human sacrifice since they did not know it.)

So, for a long time, things were fine, but then trouble began to brew. A half-mad enslaved and tormented people, escaped from Egypt into the cruel desert, and, knowingly or not, followed the orders of an aggressive popular leader: You shall not kill, and if you must make a sacrifice, take a horse, a cow, a pigeon, but not man to appease the angry God. Later, the Romans crucified this strange rabbi in Jerusalem. This was nothing unusual, since there were days when the Romans crucified as many as 2000 Jews, but a short-sighted Jew called Saul, after taking the name Paul, set out on the road and became such a good propagandist that in one thousand years all the peoples in Europe, willingly or not, acknowledged that it's not a nice thing to kill, and the Gods can do without human sacrifice. Later the grandson of a German rabbi, called something like Karl Marx, had liver problems while in London and started to write and preach about love among peoples and peace.

All this sounds very, indeed, too nice. However, the human brain did not develop at the same rate as social ideologies. The primitive ape, willingly or not, accepted what he was forced to accept, but was incapable of suppressing his destructive, killer instincts! He was not developed enough to do so, but he was intelligent enough to bring forth the most horrible phenomenon, the use of religion and ideologies to satisfy his murderous instinct. Love your neighbor, but the traitor, the heretic is not only not one's neighbor, he is the enemy of love and peace! Let the despicable traitor die! Killing no longer served to satisfy the instinct. Killing became the holy responsibility of all religious peoples, of all patriots, and of all party members with an ideology. Oh, how a believing party member dwarfs the viciousness of primitive apes. Throughout two thousand years there was no killing without a carefully constructed ideology behind it. There was no longer any need for orders, since religion, the party, ideology permitted the educated, intelligent primitive ape to do anything.

The Liebschitz-Révész couple committed a terrible and inexcusable crime!!! Thus, primitive instincts arose in a small group (trembling for its life) amid the dark fearsome buildings and gray trees of Varad. The believers control, for the moment, their repressed, destructive desires which demand the offering of a sacrifice, but then the high priest, wearing his ornate vestments, and the priestess, feeling cold and craving for a warm coat, appear and announce before the believers who tremble with fear for their lives: "Brothers, comrades! The gods are angry, the gods are thirsty! If we all perish, who shall remain to preach the ideology of goodness and love to the retarded masses straying in darkness. My followers, if we all die, hopeless darkness will shroud the land. If we all disappear, love and peace will disappear! Yes, comrades. But if only one perishes, we shall all survive and continue our fight for truth! Amen!!!"

The Liebschitz-Révész theologian pair freed their followers from all inhibitions, the victim was ready, so was the killer, who, as if acting in a Greek tragedy, carried out his order in a remote woods. No, he did not cut Chava's throat, like Iphigenia's was cut. No. First of all, hydrogen cyanide had already been discovered, second, the blood would have stained the winter coat reserved for the high priestess...

Recently, I called you on the phone and it greatly surprised us both that when I heard your voice I called you Chava. I wonder why.

I thought about it for a long time trying to find the reason for this "slip of the tongue." Those, who listen to my lectures or read my books consider me a fairly good expert. Rightly or not, who knows. But I have studied closely the psychological concept which asserts the closeness between LOVE and DEATH.

Now, darling, don't think that your good friend, Csurilla, has become senile and is escaping into his adolescent dreams. No, my brain still works, I read and study four hours a day in one of the eight languages I speak.

So, I'm not regressing, but whether I (or you) like it or not, you were my first love and to this day you symbolize love for me. (If you have doubts, we can talk it over with our beloved grandchildren.)

But, whether we like it or not, behind the rosy picture of love there appears faintly the dark picture of death and it is a picture of her, who was a messenger of brotherly love, but became the victim of murderous high priests acting in cruel hatred. It is a picture of Chava. That's why I called you Chava.

Here I stand, beside Chava's memorial of words. I lay down my pebble under the blue skies of the desert night. I shall return..., but before I go on my way, I should like to put another beautiful, colored, polished pebble on her grave, instead of saying farewell.

**- - E N D - -**