

# NEIGHBOURS WHO DISAPPEARED

## My Story



Only recently my father learned from my grandfather's friends that he comes from a Jewish family. Unfortunately this information is fragmentary, only assembled from several preserved documents, as this topic has been taboo in my father's family until recently. My grandfather is not alive and my grandmother is scared from the past, she has never spoken about it as she does not want to be reminded of it any more.



My great-grandmother Erzsbet probably went directly to the gas chamber. According to the death certificate, issued after the war in Szeged, she died on 15 July 1944 at the age of 53.



My great-grandfather István died on 15 August 1944 at the age of 62. I presume these dates are approximate. In the death certificates the column "Denomination" is not filled in.



circumstances. She returned to Szeged but had no relatives there and so she moved to Budapest and later to Bratislava. In 1948 she married Karol Elbert and on 20 September 1949 their son Tomáš, my father, was born. My grandmother had him baptised. She was afraid that the past might repeat itself.



Only my grandmother's younger brother Peter escaped a deportation transport. He fought in the Hungarian army in the Soviet Union but he also did not survive the war. During the fights at the Hungary-Austrian border he was wounded in the leg and got septic. We know neither the date of his death nor the place where he was buried.



I found the autobiography of my grandfather on my father's side. His name was Karol Elbert and he wrote it after the war. He was born in Stará Ľubovňa in the south of Slovakia in 1905. He worked as a bank clerk in Nové Zámky. Due to his Jewish origin he was dismissed in 1942. In the years of 1943 and 1944 he was twice dragged off to build German defence lines in Romania and southern Hungary. When the Red Army broke the front he escaped from the labour camp into the liberated territory. He signed up for the 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps in the Soviet Union. He was demobilized on 4 July 1945 and went back home to Nové Zámky. His flat was empty and plundered. He found out that his wife and ten-month old son were deported, probably to Auschwitz. As all the documents got lost we do not know the name of his wife and his son. My grandfather founded a small accountancy office and one of his employees was also my grandmother, his future wife. Later he never spoke about his first wife and his son.



The photo is of me, Zuzana Elbertová. To write this I have sorted through the information about my own family. It was of great benefit to me, as I touched the past. Though the story of my family is so sad I do not feel emotionally shaken up by it. I rather admire my grandmother for what she did. It must have been hard for her. I have written the story so that people will not forget.

## Zuzana Elbertová

Grammar School Přípotoční, Prague 10

