

I was born in Hungary in 1953. Both my parents were Jewish Holocaust survivors.

About 600,000 Hungarian Jews died in the Holocaust.

My father spent 5 years (1940-45) in a forced labour camp, near the Austrian-Hungarian border. 80% of the camp's prisoners perished during this period. In 1945 the Nazis collected the remaining Jews in Harka in preparation to deportation to the Auschwitz concentration camp. The Red Army liberated the camp in late March 1945, just days before the imminent deportation. Like all prisoners, my father suffered severe malnourishment, contracted Typhus in 1945 and had a shrapnel injury in his leg. In this condition he walked back to the, by then liberated Budapest in April 1945 to find that most of the family members have died, perished or disappeared.

My mother survived the war in the Budapest Ghetto where 70 thousand Jews were forced to live in a few apartment blocks in an area of 0.26 square kilometre. She was one of the few lucky ones saved by the heroic efforts of Raul Wallenberg, a Swedish diplomat.

Antisemitism was deep rooted in Hungary starting from medieval times. Like in most part of Europe Jews have never enjoyed equal rights. Pogroms and persecution were part of everyday life. Hungary adopted comprehensive anti-Jewish laws in the 20th century. Even before Germany, in 1920 Hungary has introduced the first such laws, and then 4 more between 1938-1942.

I grew up in communist Hungary and faced different forms of manifestation of antisemitism in my childhood. In 1987 I migrated to Australia to make sure that my children don't have to live with racial hatred and the burden of their Jewish heritage.

I would have NEVER imagined that antisemitism would ever surface in Australia, let alone in a scale that we experience today. I just came back from a trip to Europe, and it was interesting to see that a few countries, among others Hungary are handling the problem of antisemitism in a smart and effective way, unlike the Albanese government.

Talking to the Jewish community in Hungary, the first time ever I felt ashamed to say, that I'm Australian. This is the result of the appalling policies of this government.