
Budapest Auschwitz Sydney

Magda Altman Philip's Journey¹



It has been nearly 69 years since the Second World War ended but there has never been a day when I don't think of it and I've always wondered whether I should write down my experiences. Why? Will anybody learn from them? My intention is to be one more witness to what really happened. Did Napoleon learn from Genghis Khan? Did Hitler learn from Napoleon? Obviously not. In 1936 a journalist interviewed many leading politicians, among them Edvard Benes, then president of Czechoslovakia, asking him whether he thought there would be another war. His answer was (I clearly remember) that *as long as there is one man still alive who remembers the horrors of the last war there will be no war*. Although there were many people still alive who remembered World War I, those horrible memories did not stop World War II. But I am writing this because I hope that people will learn from the past.

My story starts in Budapest in 1920, the daughter of Sámuel Altman a Jewish Rabbi and his wife Honor Teitelbaum. Hungary was mainly a Catholic country where perhaps five percent of the population were Jewish. I had a very religious background, but around the age of 12 my very gentle and kind dad was diagnosed with leukemia, and because I never wanted to upset him, I did not want to tell him that I had doubts about religion – I preferred to think freely. My father died before the German Occupation began.

¹ Nel febbraio 2014 abbiamo ricevuto da Magda Altman, nipote di Magda Altman Philip, questa memoria che con piacere pubblichiamo. Ringraziamo l'autrice, la nipote e Sara Dellantonio per la segnalazione e l'aiuto nell'editing del testo.



Honor Teitelbaum (left) and Sámuel Altman (right), Magda's parents

After the death of my father I needed to go to work. I worked for a company in the timber trade (Dunavölgyi Faipari és Fabehozatali Részvénytársaság) and did well. Although in the meantime two anti-Jewish laws were passed by the Parliament I was the only one retained as “indispensable”.

One day going to work to No.1 Széchenyi utca (street) as the tram passed the Suspension Bridge over the Danube, to my horror, I noticed 2 German soldiers with drawn bayonets guarding the bridge. The next stop was my destination so I got off, went to the office, rang my boss and my uncle Desiderius (the only 2 people I knew who had a telephone in those days). Carefully (in case somebody was listening in) I made them understand what happened, closed the office and went home.

I understood that despite the nearly complete subordination of Hungary to Hitler's Germany, the Nazis now occupied the country. This was on Sunday, 19 March 1944. I usually worked on Sundays because the owner of the business kept the Sabbath; the office was closed, and we worked instead on Sundays. In those days, we worked six days a week.

Following the actual Nazi occupation of Hungary, life was hell on earth for us. We had heard what happened to other European Jews in Nazi-occupied countries, so our family decided to go into hiding with fake Aryan documents. It so happened that I was asked by a group of people to help make Aryan birth certificates because I was told I had good handwriting, and I knew what to do. We had great hopes as

we were told we did not *look* particularly Jewish. Our mother was blue-eyed and blonde.

Aryan documents?! The tall, blue-eyed and blonde person as the ideal Aryan did not match Hitler himself. He was a black-haired neurotic man with lunatic black eyes telling the Germans that they were superior because they had the blood of superior humans-blue-eyed blond Aryans. He found a method to flatter and mesmerize the Germans into thinking that they were the Master Race. Contrary to the normal German disposition to be thorough and thoughtful, many of them were completely taken in by Hitler's propaganda and actually believed they were the Master Race, destined to take over the world. So - Aryan documents?! In our circumstances, we made the right choice.

From the 5th of April, 1944 all Jews had to wear a yellow star, and between April and July the Germans and Hungarians deported most Jews from the Hungarian provinces. The Jews in Budapest were to go to a ghetto of about 2000 buildings marked with the Star of David. Instead of going to the ghetto, my family went into hiding with our fake Aryan documents.

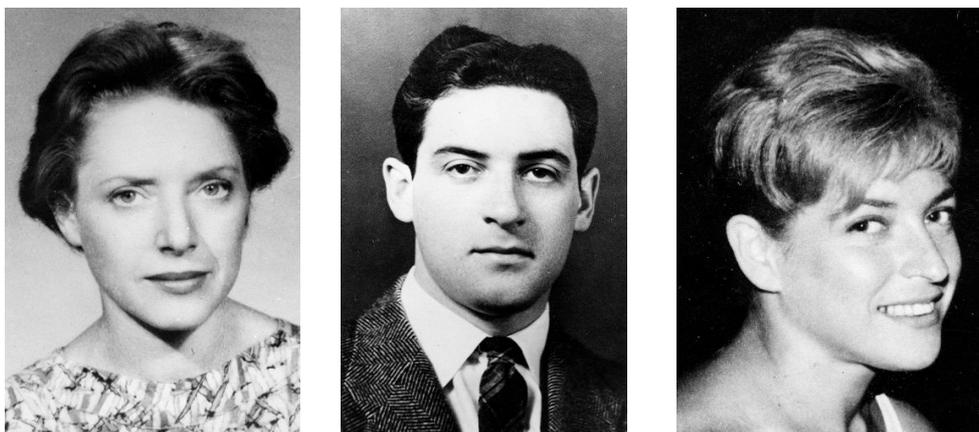
Mother and my youngest sister, Susanne, were helped by a non-Jewish friend of ours to go to a farm under the pretense of fleeing the bombing. Susanne was 9 years old; she never failed in her role to be a Christian. Later on my mother told me that every night before she went to sleep, Susanne whispered her Hebrew night-prayer into my mother's ear. At one stage a German officer in a childless marriage, on the same farm for a furlough, was begging my widowed mother to allow him to adopt her, offering great education, access, everything. Had he known she was Jewish! Kitty, my other sister, was taken by the same friend to a small town called Pécs, where a dressmaker, her landlady, gave her a job. Kitty was a very good dressmaker. By the way, the dressmaker's husband was a swastika-wearing Nazi, and he was not told about protecting a Jewess until the end of the war. The non-Jewish lady who made all these arrangements for us was aunty Mary (Manci), my mother's best friend. Manci lived in the same building, on the same floor. She was a Protestant, married to a Catholic, my mother married to a Rabbi, but those differences were not relevant in their friendship. At one stage in 1944, we had 14 Slovakian refugees hiding in our small flat and Manci helped whenever she could.



Magda walking along the street in pre-war Budapest

I understand that after the war, Kitty, when she could afford it, bought the lady in Pécs a new sewing machine, and later on she bought both of these women flats to live in. I did not know it at that time but I am very pleased to know it now. I also understand that both ladies left their flats back to Kitty in their wills.

During the German occupation, my brother Joe received his call into a forced Jewish Labour Camp. He decided to go instead of hiding with Aryan documents, but said he would only stay if the camp remained in Hungary where he spoke the language and could use his Aryan documents. I made an Aryan birth certificate for Joe, hid it inside one of the shoulder pads of his jacket, and sewed 20.00 pengő (Hungarian money) into the other shoulder pad. When he heard rumors that his group would be taken to the Russian front to work behind the German troops, he (and some more Jewish boys and a non-Jewish always very decent guard) escaped, and they jumped on a rolling train towards Budapest. He took out his birth certificate and the money from the shoulder pads and went on to start his dangerous and eventful life as an Aryan.



Magda's siblings: Kitty (left), Joe (center) and Susanne (right)

I found a factory job and an unfurnished room where the owners suggested that I should try to find some forsaken Jewish furniture. As the Jews were rounded up into the cramped ghetto a lot of furniture was just left in the abandoned homes. I said "sure", but had no intention to find Jewish furniture. Instead, I went on my fateful trip to deliver Aryan documents and some money to my cousins. They could not get out until they had these documents. I was trying to get to the tram when a Hungarian Nazi, Dicku (and another Nazi with him), who had seen me before at my relative's place, followed me and called the police. The policeman politely accepted my Aryan documents and let me go. But Dicku insisted that I should be arrested for being a Jewess. As a matter of fact when the other Nazi with Dicku noticed the policeman's hesitation and embarrassment he threateningly told him to do his patriotic duty. We were in front of the Ferenc József Laktanya (Franz Joseph Barracks). At the first fright I looked around to hide (a senseless automatic reaction) but the barracks had just one long wall. So I ran across the road where a three

story building had its entrance open – like most buildings during the daytime – and kept running up to the third floor where a woman was just cleaning her flat with the door open. I begged her “please let me in, I did not do anything, my only sin is that I am Jewish”. “Jewish, Jewish” she started to scream, I ran into the bedroom and crawled under the bed. The gang followed the scream and pulled me out. I gave up, went with them, and was arrested.

They also told the policeman that they knew more Jews in hiding. One was my little cousin, Alex (Sanyika), hidden by an Aryan couple. He was later rescued. The other was Mr. Goldstein the father of a former Hungarian beauty queen, Julia Gál (name changed) who was taken with me to police headquarters. He never returned. This was on the 25th of June 1944. As we boarded the tram, I realized that there were letters addressed to my family in my handbag. I took them out, tore them up, and threw them out of the tram. If these letters had been found, all my family would have been arrested. After that the nice policeman said he was sorry, but now he had to handcuff me. Knowing that I did not get my family into trouble I could not have cared less. At the police headquarters in Budapest I was interrogated for hours and hours. Then I was sent to the Sárvár internment camp; everybody was sent to Auschwitz from there.

It is interesting to note that the great D-Day Invasion began on June 6, 1944; 18 days prior to my arrest. Of course, we didn't know about it. In Sárvár I still was wearing a small diamond ring; I turned the stone inside my palm so it would not be noticed. I got a small medicine box from somebody, wrapped up the ring, and addressed it to my mother. Somebody managed to have some money and gave it to me, and I gave it to a guard asking him to post it. I wasn't surprised to find out later that nobody received anything.

On the way to Auschwitz, we were already totally dehumanized by the Nazis. Men, women, old and young were all thrown together in the cattle wagons. We shared a bucket for a toilet that was put in the middle of the wagon. When the train stopped for any reason, the SS threw the contents overboard-not a very elegant job for them. Two weeks later, on the 7th of July we arrived in Auschwitz. The captives in the cattle cars were always unloaded at dawn but because the war was going badly for the Nazis, the Hungarian Jews were handled with extra speed. We were not tattooed and hastily thrown into B Lager, a horror camp that was not properly set up. For instance, the water was brought in milk containers by the prison girls, and carefully portioned.

The SS, the dogs, the shouting (*los, los, schnell, schnell* - go, go, quick, quick), the confusion, and smoke from the gas chambers was bellowing in the distance. Dr. Josef Mengele, the Lord of life and death, was in charge of all of this. One man, making minute-by-minute decisions, assigned people into two queues. One queue was for the so-called “able” ones to work. The other queue was for the children, the old, and the weak to eventually be sent to their deaths. And we, dazed like we had been hit in the head, followed orders. Prisoners working for the Nazis in the camp, mostly Polish, were whispering to teenagers in German to say “sixteen”, “sixteen”. They also took children from their mother's arms and gave them to older ladies. In principle, this was because the Germans were enrolling workers *over 16* and if some teenagers were older-looking types they got away with it, and it could save

their lives. (By the way, around the end of the war, Hitler gave orders to call up 15-year-old German boys into the Army, and when he noticed some shadow of doubt, said that “they will have to die in any case”.) The mothers who gave up their babies only understood what happened to the babies later. I had a friend in Australia who was persuaded to give her little daughter to her mother because “it will be better for her”. She survived, had a new family here, but until the day she recently died she was still grieving for the beautiful daughter she lost.

Dr. Josef Mengele was one of those unbelievable evil men in history who escaped justice. How could he? Who assisted him? He was called the *Angel of Death*, but I would rather call him the *Devil of Death*. Many, many times in my life I fantasized about trying to find Mengele or to assist those who were trying to hunt him down, but I had a hard life and always had to work. There was always something to do and bills had to be paid. Excuses. Excuses. After the war the family migrated to Australia where I met my husband, a prisoner of war from Russia whose family was swallowed by the war. He took his crippling pain and eventually came to Australia, where he could not practice his profession, a solicitor, and became a businessman. Then my precious boys came along; my conscience was pulled in many directions, and I was not a heroine.

Let me return to my story. Those of us selected by the Devil to survive had a quick shower and a head shave. We all giggled looking at each other; it didn't mean a thing. We were lined up always five in a row, were counted and recounted several times a day, went to work, came from work; nobody could disappear and escape, that was of absolute importance. On our first day, we were lead into our cramped space on the floor of a timber barrack and did not get any food or water. When we arrived we were already so thirsty that we were drinking some of our shower water, but that was it. The next morning we received enough imitation hot coffee (“ersatz” = substitute, a word used a lot in Germany in those days) and our lunch was always soup so we ceased to be thirsty-but hunger started. That unbelievable *hunger* permanently occupied our minds.

We lived in fear of the SS, we cried for our families, everything was hurting-but we were first of all hungry. Every evening we received a small piece of bread with some margarine or jam or some ersatz that we were supposed to ration out for the rest of the day, but most of us ate the lot immediately. I ate mine on the way back to my barrack. Human nature is amazing though, some were saving for “harder” days and many times it was stolen from them. Nobody ever stole a crumb from me ... there was none. Most of the conversation was about food. We all remembered the excellent meals our mothers used to make and the big portions we were offered. I can clearly remember one girl saying that she used to have two dozen eggs every morning for breakfast. One girl, still a bit more sane said “darling you had two eggs for breakfast” upon which she said “please don't argue with me, it was my breakfast, I know what I am talking about!”.

At this stage we were given sterilized clothing from the people who went into the other queue, or that was what we were told by the other prisoners. We were given striped garments later when we were selected for work. We had to be careful when talking with other prisoners but we did ask where are the people who went into the other queue? And they pointed to the smoking chimneys. Prisoners were

working everywhere. Once when nobody looked, I started to converse with another prisoner sweeping in the camp who told me he was German, an ex-communist, who had been rounded up and sent to Auschwitz five years ago. We were encouraging each other. I mentioned to him that I was very uncomfortable because I have big feet and my shoes were too small. He asked me to try to be in the same place the next day when he turned up with a nice pair of men's shoes. When he gave them to me he affectionately touched me, and an SS noticed us. We jumped in different directions but luckily the SS vacillated for a second deciding which one of us to pursue. The SS ran after me, I ran into my barrack, pushed myself down on the crowded floor where he could not recognize one bald woman from the others and he gave up. The shoes were excellent, were a great help; I got home in them. I hope my benefactor survived. Thank you.

One hot day loitering around I saw my cousins on the ground, sitting in the dust. They were Erica and Vera Deutsch from Miskolc, the second largest city in Hungary. Erica was blasé but Vera and I started to cry. Imagine meeting in Auschwitz! There was another girl with them Sári (Sara) Grossman who had a tremendous sense of humor that, believe it or not, she did not even lose in Auschwitz. I joined them and we managed to stay together, work together, and hide together until liberation. After we were freed Erica and Sári went with the occupying forces towards Berlin (towards the West), Vera came back with me to Hungary. Surprisingly she also came to Australia, to Melbourne, and thankfully is still alive there with her family. We also met two other cousins from Mád (my mother's village), who did not want to join us. They did not think it was possible to survive this. We heard later from girls in the barrack that they died. No one else survived in their families, so we did not have the awful task of telling anyone.

I stayed with Vera, Erica and Sári. After spending a few days in Auschwitz I realized that the German camp management was continuously selecting girls for work, mostly for factories. I immediately suggested to my friends that we should try every queue—reasoning that if you work for them they will need you and let you live. Some girls discussed the matter with Slovakian girls who were there for years and were advised that even if you work, your food ration is not bigger, therefore life becomes much harder. Yes I said, but there are no gas chambers there. I made constant propaganda among us to try to survive, to be witnesses so that the Nazis should never get away with their incredible crimes. So there we were, always undressing for inspections and eventually managing to get into a group together. The Slovakian wife of a cousin of ours, Bella (the mother of Alex who was rescued) accepted the opinion of the Slovakian girls, decided not to join us in a factory job, and did not survive. But who was to know?

The group we were assigned to had 800 girls. First we were taken into a building in an abandoned coal mine, packed in like sardines, where we became so black that we would have died of laughter looking at each other had it not been so hot that we nearly died of heat. I remember saying that before I die I would like to be cold once more in my life. I can't remember how we got cleaned but we must have because we received our blue and white striped uniforms and were taken in cattle trucks to Ravensbruck. We arrived in Ravensbruck on 16 August 1944. There we were just lying around on our bunk beds (when we were not being counted).

Then we were taken to the Berlin suburb of Schönholz on 25 August 1944. Just as we arrived, there was an air raid, and the sirens started blaring. The SS locked us up in the cattle wagons and then they ran to the bunkers leaving us completely exposed and unprotected during the bombing. Soon the bombs were falling all around us, and we were just lying on the floor, frightened to death. I was lying next to Vera Deutsch who was trembling so much she was literally lifting from the floor. When it was over, the SS came back, opened the wagons, and started to unload us. We went to a camp obviously specially built for slave labourers—typical timber dwellings with three-layer bunk beds and a big oval where we could line up and be counted. We were naturally curious who was there before us, but we never found out.

We were assigned to work for the Angus Motorengesellschaft m.b.h. in adjoining Reinickendorf, to manufacture airplanes. Work started on the 29th, and I started on the 30th of August. We worked all week alternating day and night shifts, 12 hours each, seven days a week. It was a terrible feeling to help the Nazis with their war effort. But one German foreman, sensing our concern, told one of the girls that we should not have a bad conscience, not one airplane had been completed for the last two years because some important parts were not delivered by the Swedes because they “can’t get the raw materials”. How relieving it was to hear that! I can still see him in my mind, gentle, slight, a good-looking man, why wasn’t he in the Army? Was he sick or indispensable? What courage he had. Another time I saw him watching an emaciated Jewish girl trying to carry a cylinder, her head naturally shaven, unbelievably skinny and making an effort for every movement, with heart-piercing empathy and horror on his face. I actually saw him give this poor girl part of his own sandwich. The sandwich was so thin that the bread slices looked “shaved” instead of cut.

We suffered a lot, the work was very hard and the hours were very long. I suffered especially badly if I had to work at night and sleep during the day. The SS always woke us for our meager portion of soup for lunch, they were continually screaming some orders that prevented any sleep during the day. I had to work on a turret-lathe in the factory with all its sharp parts. I would sway with sleeplessness; it is a miracle I did not hurt myself on that machine. The bombing continued both day and night. It was a pleasure to hear every bomb fall on Germany, but our hearts broke if an allied plane fell from the sky. The Americans came at broad daylight because by that time they were flying so high that the Luftwaffe didn’t even try to fight them, the English came as it was getting darker, and the Russians at night threw down Molotov cocktails which illuminated the sky so they knew where to bomb. This also shortened the production time for the German factories.

But as the Soviet forces were getting nearer we changed work: digging trenches to save Berlin from the Russian tanks. But with the help of the Molotov cocktails the Russians knew where the trenches were, they were clever, brought huge timbers with them, laid them over the trenches and drove the tanks across. On the 20 April 1945, the SS lined us up to stand to attention for hours on end in the freezing cold, as it was Hitler’s 56th birthday. We had to listen to their speeches and to 56 cannons fired in Hitler’s honour. At the same time we could hear in the opposite direction the Russians, under the leadership of Georgy Zhukov, fighting to take

Berlin. Later it was pleasing to know that Zhukov was present when the German officials signed the Instrument of Surrender in Berlin. That night (so we couldn't be seen) we were marched out of the camp on our way to Oranienburg. The SS and the guards led the way on bicycles, the Jews and the dogs running behind. Whoever could not keep up was shot. There were also Russian prisoners on the road. The Nazis feared the Russians more than they hated the Jews because they knew what they did in Russia. The Russian prisoners were in such terrible condition that the starving Jews were throwing them some dry bread.

I saw a lot of punishments but it only happened to me once for saying one word to the Camp commander. I could not remember what I said, instead of just following orders, he pointed at me with his forefinger and said: *Hare abschneiden* ("hair to shave".) My head was shaved again! So I came home with even shorter hair than the others who managed to get home. It didn't help that once he looked at me and said that I was half-Jewish. Every time when he saw a girl who was not as bad looking as she should have been according to Nazi propaganda, he decided that she was "half-Jewish". So according to him there were hundreds of good and very good-looking half-Jewish girls in the camp. Talking about punishment, what moved me very much was that on the road back to the East some girls caught an SS (identified by the tattoo under his arm) and gave him over to the Russians. We all turned away, none of us wanted to see a human executed. But we heard nothing happening and fearfully turned around to see the SS kneeling in front of a Russian begging for his life. The Russian waved him on and let him go. It is very difficult for an ordinary soldier to kill someone eye to eye and not from a distance.

We arrived in Oranienburg and stopped there. The guards were not supposed to abandon us but it didn't take long for us to realize that they were more interested in saving themselves than in making sure we didn't escape. What they did though was frighten us that Oranienburg was mined and would be blown up, so we should keep marching with them towards the West. But luck came my way. An SS confided to me: "I am not a Nazi. I was conscripted because they can't get volunteers anymore, please believe me, the camp is not mined. Don't believe the SS. You must stay, hide, and wait for liberation". Lots of the girls didn't trust him (the Jewish capo even threatened me for being rebellious). But I secretly encouraged everybody I dared to talk with to hide. Altogether 41 of us hid on top of bunks, under beds, anywhere. Two days later we were liberated! Later on I heard that the girls who did not hide were marching for a much longer time. The Russians came in and told us the war was over, we could not understand until one smart soldier said "Gitler kaput" (the Russians can't pronounce H), and we understood that the war was over!

I was 301 days in captivity.

Soon after liberation I got hold of a small notebook and a pencil and made a lot of notes that I still have. When the notes started to fade I made photocopies.



Magda's mother (Anyu) during the war

Very soon after liberation, we started our hazardous trip back to Hungary, any which way we could, illegally jumping trains, or hitching rides on Russian trucks that were coming back from carrying supplies to the fighting forces. Once, we could find space only on an open carriage transporting railway tracks so cold that it is a miracle we didn't freeze to them. We often walked for days, and eventually trudged back to Budapest some six weeks later. It was the middle of May but I must have been so extremely excited to get home that I forgot to mark the exact date in my notebook. I found my mother bed-ridden with grief. I was the only one in the family taken to the concentration camp, and she thought I was dead. She didn't want to outlive her daughter.

How did I survive? I did any extra work that was rewarded with food. For example, I cleaned the SS officers' rooms (they were supposed to do it themselves) for cooked potato peelings. (The Germans were not supposed to peel the potatoes before boiling as peeling the raw potatoes was thicker, so it was a waste.) I once stole food from the cellars where I saw SS girls doing the same thing; we pretended not to see each other. My efforts in trying to get out of the camp as soon as possible away from the gas chambers probably helped too. But most important was my strong determination to stay alive and bear witness to Nazi war crimes.

I wonder about luck a lot. Soon after the First World War my father was offered a job as a Rabbi in New York (by a Hungarian community) but he was advised by others that US life would not be appropriate for raising children in the Jewish tradition. Sitting on the dirt floor in Auschwitz, I wondered about the advice my father

received. What if we had moved to New York? Or what would have happened had I not left the house the day I was arrested?

The Soviet forces liberated Budapest on 13 February 1945. But Budapest was not the same. Hungary had a coalition government. Later, they had an election, and the coalition government didn't win. Very soon, Hungary was taken over by the Communists. And we were not the same either. Everything reminded us of horrible memories. We dreamed of peace and freedom, and wanted to flee to the West. But a dictatorial country does not want their people to leave – they need them as workers – so it was difficult and dangerous. Eventually my brother and I took a train to the Austrian border, leaving everything behind so as not to attract attention. A peasant whose brother lived on the other side of the border in Austria guided us all night through a cornfield. We went to Vienna to the Rothschild Hospital that was set up to accept refugees. We immediately informed my mother, “the operation was successful and we can recommend the same doctors”. My mother and my sister engaged the same “doctors”, but they were caught. Luckily the kind guard let my mother and Suzanne go, and the next time they crossed successfully. We were reunited!

A secret allied train took us to Ansbach, Bleidorn in the American Zone of Germany. The Soviet soldiers were bribed to darken the train. We were asked not to utter a word until we got into the American Zone. Once there, we registered as Displaced Persons. This was the first time since the German occupation that I was not thinking primarily of surviving. While still in Hungary in 1945 or 1946, I received an official letter from the Police Headquarters or the Court (can't exactly remember), without a word of apology, that I was acquitted of the charges laid against me on 25 June 1945. They must have supposed I was a criminal for being born Jewish and for not walking into a ghetto. Having registered with the Allied Forces meant to me that I was accepted as a free person. I chose freedom with all its faults and unfairness, but, hopefully, possibility for improvement. As a result of a lot of conscientious thinking about social structures, I rejected dictatorship.

I could speak a little English (some people even managed to understand me!) and as dictated by my nature I soon found work. My first job was with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) where, after attending a training school at Bad Wiessee, I worked as a welfare officer. After that, I worked at the International Rescue and Relief Committee (IRRC). At one stage I was encouraged to apply for a scholarship from the National Council of Jewish Women in New York to study social work in the USA for three years. After finishing, I would have been expected to work for the cause for three years anywhere it was needed. I received the scholarship. But my mother was not pleased and worried about my starting on such a long term project instead of getting married. In those days, and in her eyes, a girl needed to marry. I declined the offer and received a letter of understanding from them about my decision and wishing me a happy life in Australia. I also received two letters of recommendation from each job, after I resigned. All these letters I still have.

As I mentioned before, in the camp most of the conversation in Auschwitz etc., was about food. But, as Displaced Persons, we talked mostly about immigration. Where can we go? How can we get there? What is it like here or there? We thought

about the language, the people, the climate, security. Some people just could not imagine leaving the great European culture but what about the great European wars?

And luck again. When I worked at UNRRA a very nice lady, Julia Caminer, was working in the same room as me and befriended me and asked about our plans. By this time, everybody's English in my family had improved and in any case we were dreaming of going to an Anglo-Saxon democratic country. Imagine, she said she was from Sydney, Australia and would be pleased to help us! She found work for me and my sister Kitty, and arranged our landing permits. When I went to the Military Government in Germany for my travel documents, the German-speaking employee looked at me with some empathy and asked: "*So weit?*" ("So far?"), I answered calmly: "*Je weiter Je besser*" ("the farther the better.")

Kitty and I arrived in Sydney on the 18 May, 1949. Almost immediately we started to make arrangements for landing permits for Mother, Joe and Susanne and they joined us in October, 1950. Life, hard but free, began again.

Magda Altman Philip
(with thanks to Robyn Lowe)
January 2014



Magda with her husband, Sanyi Philip