

# JOHN HAJDU

## - EASY TO READ LIFE STORY



HOLOCAUST  
MEMORIAL  
DAY TRUST

### Key terms:



**Jewish:** People who believe in a religion called Judaism. Jewish people are also called Jews.

**Nazi Party:** The political party which ruled Germany at the time of the World War Two. They thought people who were 'Aryan' (white skin, blond hair, blue eyes) were better than all others. They wanted to kill people from other groups who were different from them, such as Jewish people and Sinti and Roma gypsies.

**Concentration camp:** Places where the Nazis kept many people as prisoners, such as Jews and gypsies. They were put there because the Nazis did not like them. In the camps people were forced to work as slaves or they were killed. There were many camps like this in Europe in the 1930s and 1940s.

**Yellow star:** A symbol of the Jewish religion. It is called the Star of David.

**Ghetto:** A small area in a town or city where Jews were forced to live all together. They were not allowed to leave. The ghettos became very crowded with lots of families forced to live in the same flat or the same room.

John is from a **Jewish** family who lived in the city of Budapest, the capital of a country called Hungary.

In 1941, during World War Two, Hungary was attacked by the German army. At this time Germany was run by the **Nazi Party**. The Nazi Party and the people who supported them believed that Jews were not as good as non-Jews. They wanted to get rid of all the Jews in Europe. The Jews had done nothing wrong.

Life for Jews living in Hungary became very hard. Thousands of them were taken away and killed or sent to **concentration camps**. First, John's father was taken away by the Nazis, and John and his mother had to wear a **yellow star** as a sign to everyone that they were Jewish. This made them stand out as being different. John's mother was taken away in October 1944. John and his aunt hid in the flat of a neighbour, who was not Jewish. John says this saved his life as they did not get taken away by the Nazis.

Eventually John and his aunt had to move into a **ghetto** in Budapest. Here they lived in terribly difficult conditions with 20-25 people living in each flat. There was very little food and a lot of violence from the Nazis in control.

The people living in the ghetto were freed in January 1945 by the Russian army. John left the ghetto with nowhere to go and no idea if his parents were alive.

John's father and mother both survived the concentration camps. They all found each other and moved back to Budapest after the war. Later John and his mother came to England. There were difficulties moving to a new country, but John worked hard and became very successful. He had a good job, family life and did lots of work for his community. He has also written his story, called *Life in Two Countries*.

**John says:**

**'Arriving in this country wearing clothes donated to me in Vienna, not knowing anybody, I had to start all over again, making my way in a new world and speaking very little English. I am proud of what I have achieved.'**

**Find out more...**

The Holocaust: [hmd.org.uk/holocaust](http://hmd.org.uk/holocaust)

John has written a personal memoir entitled *Life in Two Countries* which you can read online: [hmd.org.uk/john](http://hmd.org.uk/john)  
Other resources for educators: [hmd.org.uk/educators](http://hmd.org.uk/educators)