

## Mihaly Eisikovits As POW



This is how I looked in July 1948, after they brushed us up a bit.

Before they sent us home, the Russians gave us clean shirts, in some cases white shirts, and a jacket, as well.

There were Russian and German jackets, anything they had. But they were all clean, disinfected and even washed, I think.

They gave us a coat, I got a Russian one, to keep us warm and prevent us from getting sick.

At the end of August we were already at home. So we had to endure four years. I was a prisoner of war for a total of four years and some one and a half month.

All in all I was away for seven years, I was a forced laborer for three years and another four in captivity in Russia.

There were people who arrived there way before me. If someone weakened so much it was impossible for them to be used for work anymore, they sent them home.

It didn't matter whether they were Germans, Hungarians or Romanians. I have a story related to this.

A group was formed from these patients. There was a Jew among them, his name was Bumi Meister.

He was originally from Varad, and he was the oldest of us, he was 51 or 52. In the last minute he was waken out of the group.

He came to me. He was terrified, and he came to me because I had a gift for languages.

I was a prisoner of war for almost two years then, and I pattered in Russian.

So he came to me: 'My dear Eisikovits, I beg of you...' He asked me to go to the camp management and ask them why weren't they sending him home.

I said what could I lose, so I went to them and tried to do my best. So I went there.

But there was no free access into and out of the camp! I went to the guard in the post and told him I wanted to see the camp director.

He looked at me. 'Yes, I want to see the camp director!' When he saw I was serious about it and told him in Russian, he let me pass.

I went to the management and told them: 'Gospodin. Gospodin nachalnik [Director sir, chief sir.] - I couldn't say 'tovarish' [comrade], because we were not comrades, we could only say 'sir'.

Why don't you let this man go home? He is the oldest of us. He is ill. Is it because he is Jewish?

Well, let me say that this man never fought against you!

He looked at me, I don't remember what he said, but Bumi Meister was put back into the group and he went home.

This was sometime at the end of 1945. We were still in Zaporozhe then.

First I went to Nagyiklod, because I knew I had a sister there. But she got married in the meantime.

So I came to Kolozsvar, I had an aunt there, my mother's younger sister Jolan, who survived.

Her husband, Jozsef Rosenfeld, was taken to Ukraine and came home with the highest grade invalid.

That was in 1948, around September, when I came to Kolozsvar. In Kolozsvar, in the main square, on the left side of the statue of King Matyas, I met with Bumi Meister.

'Eisikovits, my dear Eisikovits, this and that, how grateful he is etc.' He opened his wallet and wanted to give me ten thousand lei. I said to him: 'Bumi, don't do that.'

I don't need it. I can't...' 'But are you aware of what you did to me?' 'Of course I know. But that was my duty.'

I didn't accept a dime, I was happy to see him, and I asked him what was he doing for a living and what was he doing in Kolozsvár.

He said: 'I have a small workshop where I repair syringes. Because they have a plastic tube and after sterilization these get spoiled, but their metallic part remain and I restore them.'

I just brought my order for I don't know what hospital in Kolozsvár.' That's why he was in Kolozsvár. Otherwise he was living in Varad. I don't think he is alive.

Also in Kolozsvár I met one of my friends from childhood, Sanyi Nemes, who was originally from Magyarlapos.

Previously I met him as forced laborer in the Ukraine. I was barefoot then. When he saw I was alive in 1948 [he was very surprised]!

Because they buried me long before, because one who didn't come back in 1945-1946 or 1947, and showed up only in August 1948, it was just like they were coming from a different planet.

'So what brings you here?' And I told them I just came home. 'And whereto? What's on your mind?' I said I didn't know.

'Come to Des, because I was appointed commercial manager at a company and I will hire you.'

Thus I ended up in Des, and I worked as clerk for about one and a half year, when I was transferred to Moldova [Eastern part of Romania is called this way by the Romanians].