

Istvan H. In Hospital



This picture was taken on the MABI hospital terrace in Spring of 1945.

In the beginning of January 1945, my father suddenly appeared in the hospital. Up to then we knew nothing about him. I already mentioned that in the maid's room, which had a double entrance on the stairwell and from the kitchen there was an entrance, from nearly the first minute lived a renter, a woman named Anna L. who worked in a 24 hour news and tobacco stand nearby. She was a very strait, soldierly, masculine-looking woman. She loved us, and this was mutual. When we went into the star house, an Arrow Cross couple moved into our apartment, but Anna stayed in the maid's room. As soon as the retreat started, my father escaped. He skipped out about the same way as Laszlo Tabi with the bucket. [Refers to the humorist Laszlo Tabi's sketch in which he describes that he escaped from the work service with two buckets, and if they asked him for ID, he said he was just going to the well for water.] He got a small hand car somewhere, on top of that was an old stove, as if he were taking it to a blacksmith, and he came to Pest. His clothes were quite acceptable as a worker's clothes, and he even grew a mustache. He tried to find some place in Pest. I don't know where he talked to Anna, probably at the tobacco stand, it suffices to say that Anna hid him in her room. He lived for about three months there and they never noticed. He wasn't even allowed to go piss in the day time. Then in January, he couldn't stand it any longer, and he went to the hospital. And there, we were all liberated together on the 14th of January.

My father had lost a terrible amount of weight, because from 1937 or 1938 he'd had a stomach ulcer. It followed him everywhere, that he had to diet, he had to be careful. And he did that all the way to the year 1944, then after the liberation he collapsed. He wound up in the MABI hospital [MABI - Private Employee Insurance Institute. Today the Peterfy Street hospital].

Life started over, we didn't have a thing in the world, not food, not lights, and still we were unbelievably happy.