

The Kicbergerova Family



This is the photo of the Kicbergerova family from Czechoslovakia, taken in their apartment in 1945. On the left sitting that's the son, his mother is next to him, then his father. Those behind them are the Kicbergerovas' two daughters. An organization called Todt - I don't know what this acronym stood for - came there all the time. It selected people for different jobs and sent them to different locations in Germany. I also got into such a working group. This happened in October 1944. They took me to Silesia to dig tank-traps. When the Russians were closing in - we could already hear the gunfire - they sent us off on foot. We walked for 2,000 km. We entered Germany in Dresden, then we set foot on Czech soil at Marienbad. This was the westernmost point of Czechoslovakia. Those who tried to escape were captured, brought back to the group and shot dead in front of us. When we arrived in the first town, Domazlice, the Czechs behaved in such a way that one could feel there was a chance to escape. By then we had had nothing to eat for six days, and we were starving. The Czechs threw food from the windows into the street for the groups, and as we went further into the town there was some sliced bread and apples put in the middle of the street. They put out any food they had around the house, for us to eat. Despite all this no one tried to escape, although there were opportunities to do so. Only one person went missing. In the next village I thought the captives would beg for food and I decided to try to escape then. I escaped in Nevolice. The SS soldiers who were escorting us were quite far from each other, and I went up behind the first SS soldier in line in order to be as far as possible from the next one. I broke out of line and ran away through an alley. By the time the next soldier arrived there and started shooting, I was already well away, and as the other captives spread out, they had to deal with them. This happened on 24th April 1945. There was a girl from Munkacs who escaped with me, without any prior arrangement. Her name was Bozsenna. The Americans came in on a jeep, with four soldiers on it. I don't know what rank they were. They drummed up the people of the village in the center of the village. One of them stood up in the car and said in Czech, 'You're free.' Two days later, on 8th May 1945, when the war ended, we went to the town, to Domazlice. The reception of the refugees was already organized there. They set up temporary accommodation in boarding schools and schools. Bozsenna

and I decided not to stay in the temporary accommodations but to go and look for a job in the town. We first looked for a house that had a barn. When we peeked into the courtyard, we saw a young person in a wheelchair. We thought this place surely needed some help. Bozsenna, who spoke good Czech, asked the woman whether she would accept us to work for her for board and lodging. She answered that she would, because she had a big garden and raised some animals, so she needed the help. When we went back to the house, the woman said she had changed her mind and could only accept one of us. Bozsenna spoke Czech, so she chose her, but she recommended me to the neighbors, the Kicbergerovas. They spoke German, so we understood each other. Even in my wildest dreams I couldn't have imagined taking a bath that same day, and, furthermore, in hot water! The family worked in the transportation business and they had a son and two daughters. The two daughters didn't live there, as they were married. The son lived upstairs. He had a separate room and kitchen, but he ate downstairs with his parents, and he also used to listen to the radio there. He had a girlfriend his mother didn't like because she was older than him and was using him. It took only a few days for him and me to become friends. He told me once there were no girls in Czechoslovakia one could talk with about books, literature or music, but that he could do it with me. His mother was very happy when she saw what good friends we became. She wanted to adopt me, and even inquired at the authorities to see what the procedures were for that. However, I wanted to go home to Kolozsvár as soon as possible. One day the woman asked me who I was, but I didn't say anything. I told her I could say anything, because there's no way they could check it, so I preferred to say nothing. The Czech family initially employed me to help out around the house, but they didn't let me work. They were very nice people. I spent a month there before I came back to Kolozsvár.