

Toman Brod



This is what I looked like when I returned home from the war. The photo was taken in Prague in 1945.

The end of the war found me in strategically unimportant Kladsko, which was liberated relatively late. The armies aiming for Berlin and the Protectorate at first skirted it and only the second wave arrived here.

The Germans ran away before them, the evening of May 8th it was empty, and on May 9th the Russians and Polish appeared.

At that time lying in some repository of the ill, in an old factory.

With the last of my strength I crawled outside, I slept in some stable among horses, and in the morning I was crawling along a road, when some Russian saw me.

I remember that he was this typical Ivan, he had a beard, and when he saw that I was picking through garbage, he took me by the hand and led me to a nearby German farm.

At that time I had spotted fever, tuberculosis and I don't know what else... and so, when they saw that they themselves couldn't help me in any way, that I'm not improving, they took me to some hospital, some Polish field hospital. I laid there for several weeks, I got over the spotted fever and then they released me.

I set out on the road to Prague, partly on foot, partly on some trucks or freight trains, until I got to the Czech border, to the border station Mezilesi-Lichkov.

I sat at the train station and waited for a train to Prague. Then I got on it and said to myself, well, so what, I'm going to Prague.

I staggered around Prague, I hadn't forgotten where I lived, so I went there. I only hoped that the building wouldn't be destroyed, because I had heard that there had been fighting in Prague.

Luckily the building was still standing, our neighbor, Mrs. Bondy, took me in to her apartment, because Mrs. Kopska wasn't at home.

Then Mrs. Kopska arrived as well, I went over there and was telling her my whole tale, and mainly I ate. That saved my life.

I went to see a doctor, and he sent me to a sanatorium for treatment. Later he told me that he hadn't expected at all that I would survive, that's how serious my condition was.

But I had such a strong will to live that I overcame my physical condition. I gained weight, I easily ate a whole marble cake in one sitting, food was my only joy. And then to be in a clean bed and have some sort of comfort.

First I was being treated in Podoli, Prague, then in the tuberculosis sanatorium in Ples, and then in the Tatra Mountains. This photo is from my treatment in Podoli.

I wasn't able to take part in normal life until 1948. That's what the post-war period was like for me.