

Istvan Domonkos's Membership Certificate Of The Clothes-Collecting Company



This is a certificate stating that I am a member of the Clothes-Collecting Company. It was issued in Budapest in 1944. Through my father's connections at the War Department they found a pensioner officer, Laszlo Ocskay, he was a handsome reserve officer, crippled in World War I, he walked with a limp, and he organized a forced laborer company which was officially called Clothes-Collecting Company in 1944. Those who were in this company, got a paper, which allowed them to move around quite freely. This was in June, July and August. This possibility immediately ceased after the Szalasi takeover. The Jewish community provided the company with place in the rooms of the Jewish Museum. It was furnished with bunk beds, so if they came on control from the War Department, they found a regular thing. There were some very decent soldiers, whom officer Ocskay had mustered, so if they needed to go and collect clothes they always went with a military escort. In this company there weren't young people, but serious, elderly man, whom their good connections helped to go where they were safe. Of course, in order to be able to provide for a company of 150-200 military supply was needed. Through the bureau the company got regular military supply, but we had to maintain a canteen. Two of our experienced old men managed the kitchen. One of them was Zoltan Strausz, he was a wholesale butcher, and the other one was a catering specialist. The wholesale butchers were the richest people of Budapest, they ran the abattoir. Not the kosher, but the regular abattoir. My friend Zoli Strausz, whom I called Uncle Zoli at that time, told me sometime in August, 'Come, help us, we need a young man here, too, at least we will teach you how to make a good goulash.' I learned how to chop onions there.