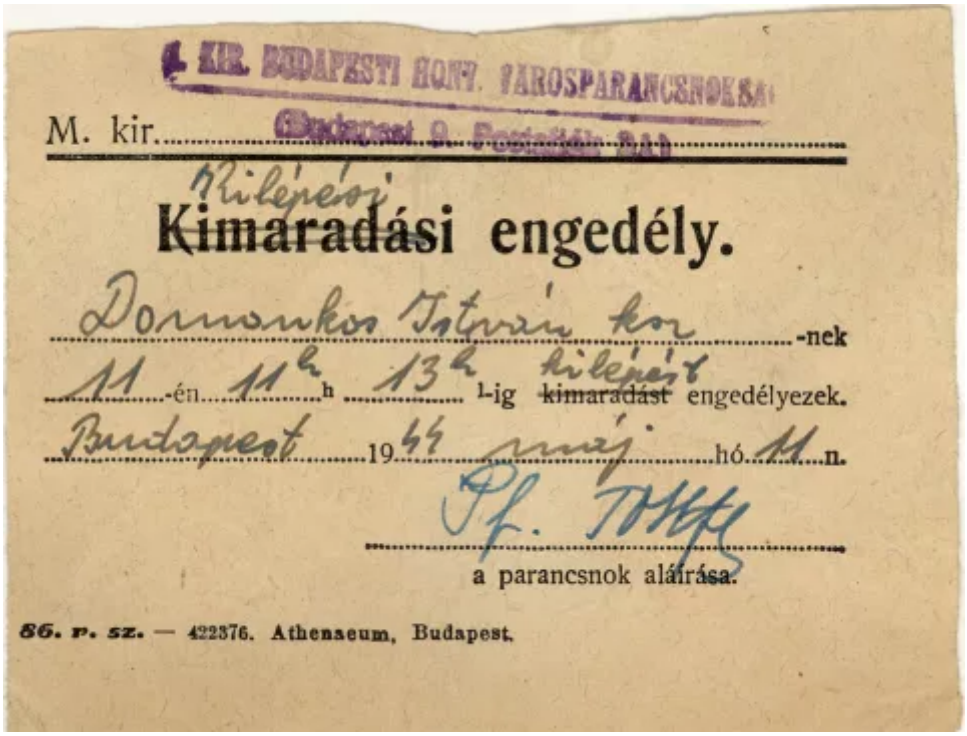
Istvan Domonkos's Pass



Istvan Domonkos's pass, issued in Budapest in 1944. In April 1944 the order came that I was reassigned to Budapest, to the Hungarian Royal Military Railway and Bridgework Depot, which was on Timot Street. Timot Street was right next to the arsenal, and not far off was the oil-refinery. So that my reassignment wouldn't be conspicuous they reassigned five persons, saying that they all had some kind of trade. There were other forced laborers there besides us as well. It was known that Timot Street was a good deal, because it was in Budapest. Our first job was to clean the sewer of that huge territory. There was quite a strict military order, we couldn't really move around, and they didn't like us very much either. The thing is, that in the first days of April, perhaps on the 5th was the first big air-attack on Budapest. [Editor's note: The first (British) air-raid hit Budapest on 3rd April 1944. From then on the air-raids became regular.] Besides the attack was especially on the arsenal and the oil-refinery nearby. When we arrived there we saw already on the first day, that the Jewish forced laborers were making ditches, but not the kind we had made in Transylvania, but saps. These were so deep that they could be covered with sleepers, pieces of rail, with all kinds of things which were at hand. The order was that in case of an air-attack Jews should hide wherever they could. The real air-raid shelters could only be used by the soldiers and the officers. There was a huge hall, in which a sawing-machine functioned, and the best shelter for soldiers was under its concrete base. A couple days passed and other air-attacks came, and we squat in that lousy trench and we survived. But almost all the officers and the soldiers died at the big shelter, because the sawing-machine was hit and it fell on them. The situation got worse and worse, there weren't any conduits, there weren't any sewers anymore. Then they allowed those who were from Budapest to go home to take a bath.