

Pal Antal



This is a picture of my father, Pal Antal, taken in Budapest in 1937. My father Pal Antal was born in Budapest in 1898. First he was an internal specialist, and when they began to dismiss or displace Jewish doctors he learnt pathology, and he was a pathologist until he died. My parents had their wedding in 1929, but it was only a civil ceremony. We had a big library at home. Dad was very serious, and he let me read everything. He had all kinds of books, including the classics. If he started reading a book and he felt from its style that this wasn't real literature, he put it down instantly; he had such delicate tastes. Besides all this, he was a good mathematician. My father was on night duty in the old Madach theatre, and he took me there sometimes, and it was free. Mother didn't go because my brother was small then. They took us to the children's theatre - Uncle Lakner's Children's theatre - once or twice, and to the cinema, once or twice. My parents' friends were mostly doctors and doctors who played music, and sometimes, in the evening, they performed chamber music at our place. My father worked as a pharmaceutical advertiser for a German company for a while in 1938. In the 1930s one could foresee that Jews weren't going to be

allowed to stay. That was a very good position. That was one point. The other one was that he used to go out to the counties to tell the medical officers which medicine was good for what. Then he would stay with them for a few days at a time, and it would come out who-and-what he was, when, on Sundays, he didn't go to church with them. He wasn't that religious, for him it didn't mean anything, I think, that he converted to Christianity only because he could support his family better this way. We didn't talk about this much, unfortunately, and that's all I know about it. I think he had converted to Christianity earlier, before my birth. Still, as my mother is Jewish, at the time of my birth I was registered as an Israelite. And in 1937 he had me convert. My brother was already born a Christian, and he wasn't circumcised.