

Judita Haikis With Her Father David Edelmann And Mother Szerena Edelmann



These are my parents Szerena and David Edelmann and me. This photo was taken during my father's being detained in the camp for political prisoners. My mother visited him once a month. Once she took me with her and we were photographed together. This photo was taken near the prison in the mountains near Garany town in 1942.

My father and his brother Mor joined the Czechoslovakian communist party. They were convinced communists. The Czechoslovakian communist party was legal, though police had lists of its members, but this was a mere formality. My father began to work for 'Mai Nap'. Besides, my father worked for 'Munkas Ujsag' [Workers Paper] too, both of them are published in Kosice. Before 1938 these newspapers were issued legally and regularly. In 1938 when [Southern] Slovakia became Hungarian, both 'Mai Nap' and 'Munkas Ujsag' became underground newspapers, because the communist party became illegal in Hungary. In 1940 the newspapers were closed and most of their employees were arrested. My father made monthly contribution to the newspaper 'Mai Nap' from his earnings and so did other employees. The newspaper was distributed among communists for free and its editing office had no profits.

1938 brought changes into our life. The communist party had to take up the status of underground. Since the police had lists of its members, they knew that arrests were inevitable. Hungarian authorities began to gradually introduce anti-Jewish laws significantly suppressing their rights in all spheres of life. My father and other members of the communist party were arrested and taken to prison in Kosice. They were charged in actions against the state. They were tortured and interrogated. The trial sentenced him to 7 months in jail.

When the war with the Soviet Union began, my father was arrested again in July 1941 and taken to the Hungarian prison in the mountains near Garany town, in the former mansion of an Austrian lord. This area belonged to Slovakia before 1938. When Hungarians came to power, the owner of

this mansion moved to Austria and his castle was converted into a prison. All prisoners were kept for political charges. My father became the leader of all prisoners. He prisoners had to cook and do all maintenance duties in the jail. My father organized courses and hobby clubs for prisoners. My father generated lists of attendants and also, made cleaning and cooking plans. He learned to cook in this camp. There was also a good library in the mansion and prisoners could use it. Relatives were allowed to visit twice a month. Two relatives could visit 2-3 days. My mother went there to visit my father and took either my sister or me with her. We rented a room from local farmers. My father made arrangements with the management of the camp for prisoners to be allowed to take some time off the camp to meet with their relatives. There were strict rules about the exact time for all of them to return to the camp. My father asked my mother to bring grandmother Amalia to see him, but my grandmother never came to see him. For her it was out of the question to stay in a goy's house and eat non-kosher food. My father was kept in the Garany prison for a year. In late 1942 it was closed and Jews were taken to work battalions while Jewish communists were sent to penal battalions to go to the frontline.