

Life in Two Countries



by John Hajdu

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**THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF
JOHN PAUL HAJDU**

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BACKGROUND

The earliest record of Jews in Hungary is from 906. Jews have been persecuted in Hungary from as early as 1092 and in 1297 they had to wear a piece of red cloth as an identification mark. They were expelled in 1349 and again in 1360, and in 1600 were deported by or fled from the Turks. In 1686 the Jews were massacred by Habsburg troops. In 1712 further restrictions were brought in to make their lives even more difficult. Up to 1783 most Jews did not have a family name. In 1783 Emperor Joseph II ordered that Jews should choose "proper" names (such as Braun=brown, or Schwartz=black) and since the language was German, it was expected that the Jews would take German names. By the turn of the century many had changed their names from German to Hungarian.

Full emancipation of the Jews and granting of citizenship was discussed in the 1840s but the law was only enacted in 1867. The situation improved only in the early 1900s, when the Jews of Hungary were at last living in relative peace and they were "even" allowed to join the army. In fact, many thousand Jews died for Hungary during World War I.

Middle-class Jews were mainly involved in the banking, insurance, academic, legal and medical professions and many ran their own businesses. Jews occupied a commanding position in economic, financial and cultural life; the press, the publishing trade and the theatres were mainly in Jewish hands and many of the professors at Budapest universities were also Jewish. Approximately half the doctors and lawyers, a quarter of artists and writers and 40% of journalists were Jewish. There were a number of Jewish Barons in the Upper House of the Hungarian Parliament.

Nevertheless, as early as 1919 the government passed the first Jewish Law, putting in place some restrictions (this was shortly followed by a second Jewish Law in 1921, the “Numerus Clausus” Act). This prevented Jews going to university and introduced a quota limiting the number of Jews to be admitted to various professions and prohibiting Jews to sit in parliament or work in any government offices. They were also kicked out of the army as they were considered "unreliable" and not worthy of performing regular military service. In addition, no Jews were to be appointed to public office.

The Jewish population in Hungary was around 12,000 in the 18th Century (5,500 living in Budapest), growing to over 500,000 by the end of the 19th Century (200,000 in Budapest). By 1910 there were 900,000 Jews (5% of the total population) living not just in Budapest but in many other parts of the country as well. Over 200,000 lived in the capital, which was about 23% of the population.

It is important to take into consideration that on 4th June 1920 the Treaty of Trianon was signed at the Trianon Palace in Paris and Hungary lost 71% of its territory and 33% of its ethnic Hungarian population. By 1941 the Jewish population had been reduced to approximately 185,000, still a significant 16%. (As a comparison, in 2012 it was estimated that the Jewish community in Hungary was about 100,000-120,000, and in Budapest about 70,000-85,000 strong.)

By 1939, Hungary drew ever closer to Germany. Count Pal Teleki was appointed Prime Minister. His government, due to pressure from the political right, prohibited Jews from running their own companies and they were therefore forced to employ non-Jews in order to retain ownership of their businesses. Despite all these restrictions they still lived in relative safety.

It was at about this time that the Party of National Will, founded by Ferenc Szalasi in 1935, emerged under the new name of Arrow Cross Party and in the May 1939 elections it became the second most popular party. This far right, pro-German and anti-Semitic fascist party was modelled on the National Socialist (Nazi) Party of Germany.



Budapest

BIRTH AND FAMILY

I have been able to trace my family back on my mother's side to 1821, to Majer Freund, probably born in 1787 in Bonyhad, a small town in Hungary which had an active Jewish community. Records of Jews were not kept before that date. Our family moved to Baja in the late 1830s [see my family tree] and then to Budapest at the turn of the century, with thousands of other Jews. My grandfather changed the family name from Freund to Farago in 1905.



My father, Gyorgy Hajdu



My mother, Livia Farago

I was born at 3 a.m. on 29th April 1937. My parents, Livia (Farago) and Gyorgy Hajdu, who married on 5th November 1933, lived in the ground floor apartment at 24 Hollan Erno utca (street) (entrance at 9 Raoul Wallenberg utca) in the 13th district, in a predominantly Jewish area on the Pest side of Budapest. [See No. 1 on map of Budapest.] My grandfather on my father's side also changed his name from Heifeld to Hajdu. He married Ida Janovitz.

Ours was a well-to-do, middle class Jewish family with both my father and grandfather in the insurance business. My mother worked as a bookkeeper. My grandparents lived just round the corner from us at 4 Csanady utca and most of our friends lived in the vicinity.



***Grandfather Bernat Freund
(Farago)***



***Grandmother Ilona Wiederkehr,
wife of Bernat***



Grandfather Hugo Heifeld (Hajdu)



***Grandmother Ida Janovitz,
wife of Hugo***

LIFE UNDER THE NAZIS

Hungary was governed by the Regent, Admiral Miklos Horthy, and his relatively moderate Prime Minister, Count Pal Teleki. Under this regime the Jews lived in reasonable safety and freedom, even though in other countries, such as Romania, Holland, Belgium and France, the deportation of Jews had already begun. In 1941 Hungary entered the war on Hitler's side. In the same year the third anti-Jewish law was passed by Parliament: this forbade marriage and sexual relationships between Jews and non-Jews.



Jewish Primary School

At the beginning of the 40s our lives and movement had become more restricted and anti-Semitic elements were gaining power. Forced labour camps for Jewish men were established all over the country and my father was taken to such a camp in the northern part of the country in late 1943. We were able to visit him only occasionally and had to take with us household items, linen and silver to barter with the local peasants to get food for my father

who was treated very badly in the camp. None of the inmates were used to such hard labour and some became ill and died. My father managed to survive, but his absence meant that my mother was left alone to care for me and look after our home.

I started school at six years of age in 1943 at a Jewish Primary School just opposite our home. (Gyorgy Pauk the internationally acclaimed violinist was at the same school at the same time.) At about this time the Germans started making plans for invading Hungary and finally occupied the country, and marched into Budapest, on Sunday, 19th March 1944, without any opposition whatsoever from the Hungarian government. Hitler's senior representative and a major organiser of the Holocaust, Lieutenant Colonel Adolf Eichmann arrived a few days later.

In the morning my mother, my cousin and I attended a matinee performance at the opera (we saw Gianni Schicchi and The Cloak by Puccini) and were given the news of the occupation when we left and we feared the worst. A few days after this I remember how I rushed home from a nearby skating rink, still with my skates on, having heard gunfire. On 5th April the Yellow Star Order was given, decreeing that all Jews had to wear a six-pointed yellow star on their clothing as a mark of identification.



With yellow star, 1944

We were ordered to leave our home on 15th June 1944, and just before we left my mother arranged for some of our furniture and other belongings to be looked after by a non-Jewish acquaintance of ours. He took up residence in a room in our apartment as a safeguard against strangers being billeted in our flat, which was part of the new anti-Jewish laws.

Új telefonszámaink:
 421-331-től 421-335-ig
BUDAPESTI IZR. HITKÖZSÉG
 VII. SIP-UTCA 12
 TELEFON: 421-335, 421-334, 421-333,
 421-332, 421-331
 Levélcím: Budapest 4, Postafiók 167
 Dr. Li. / E. 40 77/9-16 sz.

Hajdu János
B u d a p e s t
 Honvéd u. 8.

Válasz esetén visszaküldjük erre a címre
 hivatkozva.

Kíváratára, tanúnyilatkozatok alapján igazoljuk, hogy Önnek, mint zsidónak a Magyarországon fennállott fasiszta uralom idején 1944 június végén, akkor 8 éves korában, édesanyjával, Hajdu Györgynével, későbbi házassága alapján Frank Sándornéval, a Hollán u. 24 szám alatt volt lakásukból a budapesti zsidók összeköltöztetésére kijelölt u.n. sárga csillagos házak egyikébe, Váci ut 4 szám alá kellett költöznie. Innen édesanyját októberben elvitték. On ott maradt, majd november 22.-én a deportálásból visszaérkezett nagynénjéhez Gottesmann Kálmánéhoz került az akkor a Wesselényi u. 44. sz. alatt működött zsidó kórházba és itt szabadult fel 1945 január 18-án.

Budapest, 1956 december 4.

Tisztelettel
 Budapesti Izraelita Hitközség Elöljárósága:
 Dr. László Jenő / főtitkár
 Dr. Heves Lajos / elnök

Document confirming the move into a designated yellow star house



*4, Vaci ut (marked with an “X”)
(photo taken on a later return visit)*

By coincidence, my cousin Juti and her parents, the Kordas, lived in a “yellow star” house (so called because a large yellow star was painted on the main gate) at 4 Vaci ut (road). [See No. 2 on map of Budapest.] Since they had already gone into hiding, their flat was empty and so we could move in immediately. This was not as easy as it sounds, because a strict curfew was in operation and there were groups of anti-Jewish elements looking out for anybody with a yellow star, trying to kill them. It took us some time to move between the two flats (which normally would have taken only 20 minutes), creeping along the wall, in the dark, terrified we may be spotted.



Aunt Iby



Uncle Rezso

We were soon joined there first by my aunt, Iby, and my mother's father and later by Magda, my uncle Rezso's friend and future second wife. While living there, only one member of the family was allowed out of the house for a maximum of two hours per day, which was spent mainly in queuing for basic food items in shops with already limited supplies. Jews were not allowed to buy such items as butter, eggs and rice. There was no medical care available; we had to rely on medicine that we managed to bring with us. Jewish bank accounts were frozen, our jewellery was confiscated and we were not allowed to visit parks or cinemas.

The ultra-right, black-uniformed Arrow Cross Party (consisting mainly of anti-Semitic thugs) had become even more powerful and supported the Germans in every possible way. Adolf Eichmann ordered the deportation of all Hungarian Jews and by July 1944 over 400,000 Jews in Hungary had been killed or deported in sealed railway wagons each containing 80-100 people. By August only the Jews in the capital remained.

On 15th October 1944 Admiral Horthy announced that he wished to make peace with the Allies. As a result, the Germans decided to throw out the old government (Admiral Horthy was arrested by the Germans and taken to Germany where he was interned) and installed instead a “puppet” government under Prime Minister Ferenc Szalasi, who was the head of the Arrow Cross Party. He had a reputation for ruthlessness, and was feared by everybody, especially by the Jews.

At the same time (17th October) Adolf Eichmann set up his headquarters in Budapest and brought in an army of 9,500 S.S. troopers. (Schutzstaffel, abbreviated to S.S., was a major Nazi organisation under Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party). By the end of October another anti-Jewish law had been passed by parliament (yet another of more than a hundred such laws), declaring that the Hungarian State would assume possession of all Jewish property and assets.

After the mass round-up of Jewish men from the yellow star houses in Budapest had been accomplished, it was the turn of the women. People were given only a few minutes to get ready before being taken away without any prior warning. My aunt Iby and Magda were taken with thousands of other women, first to an assembly point outside Budapest (Vecses) and then on to a labour camp at Budafok, from where they were going to be taken towards the Hungarian border and then to a concentration camp.

Iby managed to escape just as they were leaving Budafok and in the dark, avoiding the main roads, somehow managed to come back on the evening of 13th October, spending one night with us before at 6 a.m. the following morning members of the Arrow Cross Party arrived. (Magda, who also escaped, went into hiding somewhere else.) They searched every flat and herded together in the courtyard all the Jews still left, including my mother. They were then taken away.

My mother later explained that they were marched to a brick factory in the suburbs of Budapest and from there they had to walk approximately 30 kilometres a day for five days, until they reached the village of Kophaza near Sopron not far from the Austrian border, where they were made to work on fortifications and lived in stables by the roadside. Any jewellery, cash, even lighters and cigarettes were confiscated. It was a cold winter, they had hardly any food and not surprisingly many people died.

Some time later they were marched on to Mauthausen in Austria, and on the way were forced to sleep on the ground in the snow for several nights. According to her, they arrived around 10th November 1944.

Mauthausen was a major concentration camp set up by the Germans where the inmates were beaten regularly, and as a result my mother sustained several permanent injuries. I did not see her again until July 1945.

Meanwhile, as my mother was being taken down to the courtyard to be deported, my aunt Iby grabbed me and we rushed across to one of our non-Jewish neighbours where we were allowed to hide in a cupboard and so escape deportation. This act unquestionably saved my life. About a week later, my mother's father, who also lived with us, died of throat cancer after a long illness. Nobody could go to the funeral as we were only allowed out between noon and 2 p.m.

It was getting more and more difficult to stay in hiding, but Iby was able, by devious means through friends, to obtain a special permit which enabled us to move into a flat about fifteen minutes' walk away in Pozsonyi ut. This flat was in one of the few designated blocks declared safe and under the protection of either the Pope or a neutral country like Sweden or Switzerland. We left under cover of darkness again, hoping not to get caught by members

of the Arrow Cross troops patrolling the streets. Sadly, at a different location, someone shot at an Arrow Cross patrol, which resulted in them firing at everybody in the vicinity, including my Uncle Pal, who was consequently killed.

We lived at this address on the fourth floor of the apartment block in virtual seclusion. Despite the apparent protection, Iby was taken away once more, but fortunately managed to escape again after a few hours and return to me. As a seven-year-old, I would have been completely lost without her. While living there we suffered several air raids and on one occasion a bomb fell so near us that all the windows were blown in on top of us as we were sitting nearby. Quite often we had to move into the coal cellars for safety reasons, and miraculously managed to survive without getting hurt.

GHETTO



30 Wesselenyi utca, in the Ghetto (marked with an 'X')



After about a month of living at the so-called “protected” apartment block, and as a result of more and more stringent checks by the Hungarian Nazis, at the end of November we had to move into the ghetto (the old Jewish quarter, approximately 0.3 sq. km) which was a designated closed area set aside for Jews only, behind the Great Synagogue of Budapest at Dohany utca; all non-Jews were moved out. The area bordered by Dohany, Kertesz and Kiraly utca and Karoly korout (boulevard) consisted of approximately 290 buildings.

The Jews were herded into two ghettos: in one lived about 35,000 of those who were able to acquire foreign passes (Swedish, Swiss, Vatican and Red Cross, and who stayed in the houses protected by them in the international ghetto); and about 70,000 so-called "unprotected" Jews in the other, general ghetto, where we were, as my aunt could not get hold of a pass. We were told to move into a flat in a very old and dilapidated apartment block in the old Jewish quarter, at 30 Wesselenyi utca. [See No. 3 on map of Budapest.] There were already several hundred Jews "living" in every one of these buildings, with 20-25 people in each flat. We were only allowed out of the house at certain times of the day for a limited period, having to wear our yellow stars at all times.

CPW

MAGYAR ISRAELITÁK
ORSZÁGOS KÉPVISELETI IRODÁJA
Budapest VII., Sip utca 12
Telefon: 222-261
Levélcíme: Budapest 5, postafiók 333
Sürgőzőcím: MIOK

DRITTES EXEMPLAR Budapest, den 2. Aug. 1965

Frau
Alexander Frank
vorher
Frau Georg Hajdu
geb. Livia Farago
London

dr. VILNYI E 226
Szám:
Válassz csatán az alvaskendők erre a címre hívókört!

Wir bestätigen Ihnen, in Ergänzung unseres Schreibens vom 16. Dez. 1964, dass Sie, geb. am 30. Mai 1909 in Budapest, Name Ihrer Mutter Ilona, wiederkehr,

wegen den Judenverfolgungen in Ungarn vom 5. April 1944 beginnend, den für die Juden vorgeschriebenen "gelben Stern" - als unterscheidendes Zeichen - zu tragen verpflichtet waren. Sie wohnten seinerzeit in Budapest V. Hollán ucca No. 24, mit

Ihrem Sohn: Johann Hajdu, geb. am 29. April 1937, der ebenfalls den gelben Stern tragen musste.

Am 15. Juni 1944, bei der Zusammensiedelung der Budapest-Juden übersiedelten Sie beide in das Gelbesternenhaus V. Váci ut No. 4. Von diesem Hause wurden Sie im November 1944 durch die Faschisten verschleppt und deportiert, während Ihr Sohn,

Ende November 1944, in den Ghettozeiten in das Ghettohaus VII. Wesselenyi ucca No. 30 gebracht wurde. Am 18. Januar 1945 wurde er auch dort befreit und trug er bis zu diesem Zeitpunkte den gelben Stern.

Document confirming that John Hajdu was in the Ghetto

Since food was scarce we had no choice but to eat horsemeat and bread and dripping, and water had to be brought up from outside in buckets. There was no medicine, no soap or any kind of cleaning material; rubbish and waste was not collected. Bodies were left in the streets.

The apartment block we lived in was bombed by the Russians several times, and on one such occasion part of the building collapsed while everybody was hiding in the cellars. In December the advance guard of the Russian troops had arrived in the outer suburbs of Budapest, damaging or demolishing most of the buildings as they approached. Conditions for the capital's inhabitants became desperate, with bombing and shooting around the clock.

The Russians had surrounded Budapest by Christmas and were advancing towards the centre. Eichmann decided to leave Budapest and gave orders to his troops to move out; but he was determined to exterminate every Jew in the ghettos, by a combined force of the S.S. and the Arrow Cross. Crazy Arrow Cross gangs continued to murder Jews in the streets. Eichmann gave orders to mine the whole area and planned to blow it up. (Another plan to go from house to house and shoot every Jew was abandoned.) However, due to the rapid advance of the Russians, they did not have time to detonate the mines as planned and withdrew from the capital within hours.

After heavy bombardment, the Russian troops arrived on the night of 17th January 1945 and freed us early morning on the 18th, minutes before the mines were due to explode. They found 3,000 bodies. The siege of Budapest lasted 100 days. By the time the Russians had occupied the whole of Hungary on 4th April 1945, less than a quarter of the total Hungarian Jewish population had survived. It is estimated that between 1941 and 1945 at least 500,000 Hungarian Jews were killed.

Having been in the Ghetto for just over six weeks, my aunt and I left in a weak and dazed condition, walking through a ruined city into a world we hardly recognised. All the bridges over the River Danube had been blown up and most of the houses were

damaged, on fire, or demolished; the streets were littered with corpses and there was no food, only horse meat was available.

We did not know what had happened to my parents and other relatives, we had nowhere to go, our flat was now occupied by complete strangers; but after pleading with them they allowed us to live in the maid's room on a temporary basis.

My uncle Rezso, who had earlier also been in hiding, was captured and sent to a labour camp but managed to escape. After the departure of the Germans he came to live in a room in the same apartment block as us, where he was joined by Magda. Some time later the advancing Russians freed my father from another labour camp and, fortunately, he was also able to join us.

ROMANIA

Magda's family had a house in Nagyvarad (Oradea) in Romania which had by then been liberated by the Russians, so the conditions were better than those in Hungary which was still at war. It became clear that the only solution to our desperate and near-impossible situation was to find our way there.

Magda and Rezso left first by a cattle train (there being no passenger train service), followed by us (my father, Iby and me) some days later. With Magda's help, Rezso and my father opened a small drugstore (called Globusz) where they did well enough to survive. It was at this time that Magda found out that her parents had perished in the concentration camp and my father, as well as the rest of us, thought that my mother would not come back either. Consequently, my father started a relationship with a friend of Magda's, a local woman called Eva.

We lived with Magda, and I went to school there (part of class 2) between February and June 1945. We lived under Russian occupation in relative freedom with the native Romanians who spoke both Romanian and Hungarian (Nagyvarad was part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and of Greater Hungary until the 1920 Trianon Peace Treaty).

I was able to study in peace and passed my exams with excellent results.

- 3 -
FEBR - JUNE 1945

Bizonyítvány

anyakönyv

száma: 2

10. SZ. ALL. NÉPISKOLA

népiskola 11. osztá.

ában az 1944/45 iskolai évben elért eredményről.

Magaviselet	.....
Magdolom	.....
Hit- és erkölcsstan	<u>Kituno - Kituno</u>
Beszéd- és értelemgyakorlatok	<u>Kituno</u>
Olvasás	<u>Kituno</u>
Írás	<u>Jeles</u>
Fogalmazás	<u>Kituno</u>
Nyelvi ismeretek	<u>Kituno</u>
Földrajz	.....
A magyar nemzet története	.....
Allampolgári kötelességek és jogok	.....
Számolás és mérés	<u>Kituno</u>
Természeti, gazdasági, egészségi ismeretek	.....
Rajz	<u>Kituno</u>
Kézimunka	<u>Kituno</u>
Ének	<u>Kituno</u>
Testnevelés	<u>Kituno</u>
<u>Általános iskolai</u>	<u>Kituno</u>

Jegyzet:

Magam vizsgát lettem

mulasztott munkanapok és ismétléselek száma:

..... igazoltan. igazolatlanul.

elt Nagyvarad 1945. jún hó 23. napján.

Lehel-Fulian P. H. tanító.

átvívizsgáról szóló záradékra szánt hely:

elt 19 hó napján.

ROMANIA

P. H. tanító.

School certificate Nagyvarad, Romania.

"Jeles" means "Good",

"Kituno" means "Excellent".

In the meantime, my mother was in Mauthausen surviving in unheated and damp barracks. There was hardly any food or water and the camp was infested with lice. She ate snails if she was "lucky" enough to find any. She sustained several heavy beatings with lasting injuries, her ribs were broken, her teeth were smashed and her hair fell out. Over 110,000 people died in this camp. In the spring it was decided by the Germans to open another camp in Gunskirchen and 16,000 Hungarians, my mother amongst them, were marched there from Mauthausen.

The killing of inmates continued and by the time the first American troops reached the camp on 4th May 1945, only 5,000 inmates were still alive. My mother was taken to a nearby hospital in Wels where for two months she was looked after by the Americans, who helped her and many others to recover from hunger, dehydration and complete exhaustion. In her subsequent long life she never lost the mental scars, and consequently suffered from various problems, including a persecution complex, no doubt directly attributable to what happened to her in the camp.

She returned to Budapest on 16th July 1945 and went to our original home (24 Hollan Erno utca), where the occupants refused to let her in or to vacate the flat or give back any of her belongings and valuables. She was totally on her own, not knowing what had happened to our family, and it took her some time to locate Iren, Rezso's first wife, who told her that her father had died and that we were all in Romania. She decided to follow us there.

Her incredible return "from the dead" was a great surprise and source of happiness to all of us, but also created great confusion and upheaval for everybody, particularly my father, who by this time was planning to marry Eva. [Some time later, after they divorced, my father did in fact marry Eva and later they returned to Budapest, where he worked in the insurance business again.]

BUDAPEST UNDER THE COMMUNISTS

As a consequence, my mother, my aunt and I returned to Budapest a few days later where we lived at our cousins' flat at 4 Vaci ut again for some time. We then managed to find through an old friend a very small one-bedroom flat on the 3rd floor of 24 Hollan Erno utca (in the same block where we had lived before).

My mother separated from my father and soon after divorced him. She also managed to persuade the occupants of our original flat to give us back some of our furniture.



*Flat 1 on 3rd floor, 24 Hollan Erno utca
(photo taken on a later return visit)*



***24, Hollan Erno utca. Showing both the homes
on the first and third floors (marked with an "X")***

About this time my mother met an old friend of hers, Alexander Frank, also living in the same apartment block, who had a son a year younger than me and whose wife had perished in the same concentration camp where my mother had been held. They got married on 9th November 1946 and we moved into their flat on the third floor. Unfortunately, this marriage only lasted about a year and also ended in divorce in December 1947, since after the traumas of the camp my mother could not get used to married life again.



My mother with second husband Sandor Frank

I rejoined the Jewish primary school Class 3 (1945-46) almost opposite our home and finished in the top five at the end of the year.

Kajdai János, Pál
Félévi értesítő

Kajdai János, Pál
Bizonyítvány

Az anyakönyv sorszáma: *9*
 az *V. évi*
 az *1945/46* iskolai év első felében elért eredményéről

Az anyakönyv sorszáma: *9*
 az *V. évi*
 az *1945/46* iskolai évben elért eredményéről

Magaviselet	<i>jeles</i>	Magaviselet	<i>jeles</i>
Szorgalom	<i>jeles</i>	Szorgalom	<i>jeles</i>
Hitt- és erkölcstan	<i>jeles</i>	Hitt- és erkölcstan	<i>jeles</i>
Beszéd- és értelemgyakorlatok	<i>jeles</i>	Beszéd- és értelemgyakorlatok	<i>jeles</i>
Olvasás	<i>jeles</i>	Olvasás	<i>jeles</i>
Írás	<i>jeles</i>	Írás	<i>jeles</i>
Populzus	<i>jeles</i>	Populzus	<i>jeles</i>
Nyelvi ismeretek	<i>jeles</i>	Nyelvi ismeretek	<i>jeles</i>
Földrajz	<i>jeles</i>	Földrajz	<i>jeles</i>
A magyar nemzet története	<i>jeles</i>	A magyar nemzet története	<i>jeles</i>
Allampolgári kötelességek és jogok	<i>jeles</i>	Allampolgári kötelességek és jogok	<i>jeles</i>
Számolás és mérés	<i>jeles</i>	Számolás és mérés	<i>jeles</i>
Természeti, gazdasági, egészségi ismeretek	<i>jeles</i>	Természeti, gazdasági, egészségi ismeretek	<i>jeles</i>
Rajz	<i>jeles</i>	Rajz	<i>jeles</i>
Kézmunka	<i>jeles</i>	Kézmunka	<i>jeles</i>
Ének	<i>jeles</i>	Ének	<i>jeles</i>
Térszemelés	<i>jeles</i>	Térszemelés	<i>jeles</i>
Jegyzet:	<i>jeles</i>	Jegyzet:	<i>jeles</i>

Elmulasztott munkanapok és istentiszteletek száma:

igazoltan igazolatlanul
 Készenléti napok száma: *15* napján

P. H. *Nobel Ferenc*
 tanító.

Látta szülő v. helyettes: *Kajdai János*
 tanító.

5th DISTRICT Jewish School

Exam results from Jewish Primary School

In September 1947 I joined a well-known Lutheran school on Fásor ut run by a Christian religious order well known for its high reputation and famous students, many of them Jewish, where I finished my primary schooling. I clearly remember when going to school by trolley bus every morning, that each time we passed a large, Catholic church, many of the passengers made the sign of the cross. This can be explained by the fact that about 70% of Hungarians were Roman Catholic.

Between 1948 and 1950 the “people’s democratic” regime was established in Hungary. This was in fact a communist dictatorship with a single party, the Hungarian Working People’s Party. Parliamentary democracy was abolished and the media (newspapers and radio) were controlled by the Party. There were spies everywhere; you had to watch what you said and to whom. Neighbours suddenly disappeared and nobody heard from them again. We had to observe Soviet public holidays and march with the party officials to demonstrate our “solidarity”.



8, Honved utca (flat marked with an “X”)

After her divorce my mother and I had to move. She managed to find a flat very near the Parliament building at 8 Honved utca, third floor, no. 3. [See No. 4 on map of Budapest.] The flat consisted of a small entrance area, a kitchen, a bathroom with a toilet and one main room, with just enough space for two beds, a few pieces of furniture and was heated by an old fashioned, large ceramic coal stove. This room was used as a living room and

bedroom, which meant no privacy for either of us. The few friends who visited us, had to be “entertained” in the kitchen, where the only table was situated next to the icebox.



School in Szemere utca



With mother, 1949

As it was impossible to find a job, my mother took in paid work to support us. I continued my schooling at the nearby Szemere utca general school just two blocks from our home from 1947 to 1951.

ALTALÁNOS ISKOLA
1004 Budapest, Szemere u. 3-5. ALTALÁNOS ISKOLA
SCHOOL, SZEMERE UTCA /GENERAL
1950/51
Általános iskolai bizonyítvány
(munkafüzet)
Góty

Hajdu János. 1937. é. April 3. sz. 28. a.
Budapest.
születési (anyjának leánykori neve): ...
... Szemere utca 5. ...
...
Magaslati ...
Szegedi ...
Magyar nyelv ...
Magyar irodalom ...
Cseri nyelv ...
Történelem ...
Földrajz ...
Biológia ...
A műveltség alapjai ...
A műveltség tartalma ...
Jegyzet ...
...
Jelen műveltség az endeti anyanyelvvel mindenben megegyezik.
A műveltség (név): ...
(Dátum): ...
Kelt: ...
A. T. H. s. a. - PÁTERA - Szemere u. 3-5. (K)
Létrejött: Munkafüzet: Szemere u. 3-5.

School leaving certificate at Szemere utca school, 1950-51



As a Young Pioneer, 1951

Általános FIUISKOLA
Budapest, Szemere u. 3-5.
Igazolvány
Igazolom, hogy Hajdu János, volt VIII. b. osztályos tanuló a 28. Petőfi Sándor utcai csapatnál, mint ifjúsági vezető működött.
Budapest, 1951. aug. 1.
Tuz. Katalin
szervező

Confirmation of being leader of the Young Pioneers' group

During the final year I got involved with the Young Pioneers (equivalent to the scouts) and ended up as the leader of my group. Each member was given a name from the animal kingdom and I was called "Serious Wolf"! Also at this time I started to learn to play the accordion on a borrowed instrument; however, that did not last long and I never managed to play very well.



Playing the accordion in 1950

It was at this school that I met fellow student Peter Szabados, who later escaped with us and who now lives in Austria. Our friendship has endured until this day.

By this time my aunt Iby had joined us in our small flat. The flat overlooked a printing press in Kalman Imre utca, which was in use 24 hours a day, making a constant noise and limiting our privacy, since the workers were able to look into our premises at all times.

Life was hard and, for example, all coal needed for heating had to be bought at a special shop about ten minutes' walk away and stored in the cellars, in the basement of our building. Ice for refrigeration purposes was brought in blocks from the Hold utca market, also some walk away, and had to be carried back to our flat whenever the icebox needed refilling. As we had very little money the food we ate was simple, basic, monotonous and unhealthy. As a result, for many years I was overweight.

For entertainment we had an ancient radio and very few toys. A popular game which cost very little was table top football. All the players were represented by large buttons which we filed down on one side to give them an edge, and the ball was a small button which we flicked.

We celebrated St Nicholas' day on 6th December when it was traditional to put small presents in children's shoes. I put all my shoes (a total of four pairs!) next to the bed, hoping to find something in them by the morning, and usually got some sweets and plastic toys as my mother had no money for anything else.

While at Szemere School I was invited, as one of the best pupils in the class, to join the famous Pioneer Railway (built in 1949) as a postman on top of Janos Mountain on the outskirts of Budapest.



This is still the only functioning narrow gauge railway (11 km long) run entirely by children between the ages of 10 and 14, with the exception of the person driving the locomotive, and the journey takes about 45 minutes. My training included a course at the Budapest General Post Office.

Having finished Class VIII (final year) at Szemere school in 1951, I was trying to get into a grammar/high school to prepare for higher education later on, but under the communist regime Jews were considered second-class citizens. Openly practising our religion was not allowed and it was certainly not taught in school.

Not only were we Jewish, but my grandfather (on my father's side) had previously been a director of the Fonciere and Adria insurance companies, and my father a director of the Sun Life Insurance Co, Budapest branch, which was situated in the Gresham Palace Buildings at the Pest approach of the Chain Bridge (now a hotel). My maternal grandfather owned a printing company, so consequently it was deemed that my family had upper middle class origins and therefore I was from an unreliable capitalist background, and so was unable to get a university place anywhere.



School in Rippl Ronai utca

Fortunately, my aunt Iby through her friends met a teacher (Ivan Shelley, with whom I still remain in correspondence) at the Highway/Railway Technical College and he was able to persuade the principal to offer me a place there in 1951. I stayed at this

school at Rippl Ronai utca, well known as a technical school since the turn of the century, until 1955.

I had no choice in the matter of subjects to study and had to take the following, amongst others: bridge building, rail signals and safety equipment, technical drawing, geology, substructures, superstructures, masonry, carpentry, surveying, also history and Russian (in both of which I came top of the class). Although I knew this would be the wrong career for me, I hoped that later on I would somehow be able to change direction. So I had to make sure that, despite having great difficulty in understanding some of these subjects, I would still pass my exams, which I managed to do and finished in the top half of the class.

I spent four relatively happy years there, due mainly to the fact that the majority of the teaching staff as well as the headmaster and most of the students were deeply anti-communist.

COPY
MÁSODLAT

Anyakönyvi szám: 5.197.55

Ipári technikus oklevél
HAIJÓV JÁNOS

Budapest..... 19.37. évi..... április..... hó 29. n.

született, ipari technikus tanulmányait a..... Népgazdasági Technikum..... I-II. oszt.
1951-52., 1952-53.,..... Készletelési Építőipari Technikum..... IV. oszt. 1953-54.
Vasúti Polgármesteri Technikum..... IV. oszt. 1954-55..... elvégzte.

A képesítő vizsgabizottság előtt képesítő vizsgát tett a következő eredménnyel:

HUNGARIAN	Magyar nyelv és irodalom	..... jó.....	Alapítvány	..... közepes	SUB-STRUCTURE
HISTORY	Történelem	..... jó.....	..... munkahelyi gyakorlat	..... jó.....	PRACTICAL WORK
MATHEMATICS	Matematika	..... jó.....			
SURVEYING	Teknológiai	..... közepes			

Ipári technikus tanulmányai folyamán a többi tantárgyból tanúsított előmenetele:

RUSSIAN	Orosz nyelv	..... jó.....	Teknológiai	..... jó.....	SURVEYING
	Földrajz	..... jó.....	Geográfia, tájgazdaságtan	..... közepes	TECHNICAL DRAWING
	Fizika	..... jó.....	Statisztika	..... közepes	
	Kémia	..... jó.....	.....	.....
DRAWING	Szabadkézi rajz	..... jó.....	.....	.....
	Abrázoló geometria	..... közepes	.....	.....
P.T.	Testnevelés	..... jó.....	.....	.....
	Munkagazdaságtan	..... jó.....	.....	.....
WAGONARY CARPENTRY	Konstruktív technika	..... jó.....	.....	.....
	Acésszerkezetek	..... jó.....	.....	.....
	Angol nyelv	..... jó.....	.....	.....

A szabályozott követelményeknek jól megfelelt.

Ez a technikus oklevél a Magyar Népköztársaság Elnöki Tanácsa 1955. évi 37. számú törvényerejű rendeletének 13. §-a szerint:

a..... Vasúti..... polgármesteri..... technikum..... R.P.P.L. ROMAI STREET.....
technikus munkakör betöltésére és a törvényerejű rendeletben, illetőleg az annak alapján kü-
lön meghatározott felsőbb tanulmányok folytatására képesít.

Kelt,..... Budapest..... 197.55..... június..... hó 18. n.

Törvény: Endre.....
a vizsgabizottság elnöke

Gáborján: Ernő.....
a vizsgabizottság elnöke

A. T. 165. 2. sz. - Nyomtatott 14 000 - 000 - 12 000 példányban

School leaving certificate at Technical College, 1955

Despite the stringent regulations, they were able to give us a relatively old-fashioned, high-quality education, especially in the traditional subjects of history and geography, without trying to brainwash the students with communist doctrines. This was unheard of and almost unique in Hungary: had the authorities been aware of it, most of the teachers would have been sacked or even arrested for anti-communist activities. They were constantly watched and frequently interrogated. It was compulsory to learn Russian, and at the same time I started learning English privately from a friend of my mother's.



Digging an irrigation canal in the puszta

During the winter and summer breaks we undertook several working holidays and our class visited various parts of the country, partly living on trains and partly in tents or youth hostels (for example, Pecs in 1952 Miskolc-Tapolca and Dunapentele in 1953, Agasvar in 1954, Bankut in January 1955).



Work experience. Measuring.

In 1954 I was sent on a special working trip to Balmazujvaros, a small town, near Debrecen on the Great Plain (puszta) of Hungary. We had to measure and dig an irrigation canal in the August heat.

Towards the end of the fourth year, to help support our families, some of us joined the local snow-clearing teams and worked at night until dawn clearing the bridges and streets of Budapest in freezing conditions and for minimal wages (I think it was about 50 Forints, now less than 30 pence).

At this time I was issued with the official state identity document, in which a record was kept every time one changed one's job.

Slagom HÉSEVI
Az igazolvány tulajdonosának adatai

1. Családi neve: *IGAZOLVANY*
2. Utóneve: *JÁNOS*
3. Előnév (leánykor):
4. Születési helye: *BUDAPEST* ország: *magyar*
5. Születési ideje: *1927. év. április 27.* város: *község*
6. Születési ideje: *1927. év. április 27.* hó: *27.*

4. Érvényes: *1959. május 14.*
5. Foglalkozása: *tanuló*
6. Szakképzettsége: *művés.*
7. Katonai ig.-nak száma: *24994017*
8. Csehszlov. ig.-nak száma:
9. Állampolgársága:
10. Anyjának leánykori család és utóneve: *FARAGO LILIA*
11. Apjának család és utóneve: *Slagom György*
12. Kiallítás okos: *1959. május 14.*
13. Kiallítás hatóság: *BM. Budapesti Főosztály*
14. Kiallítás ideje: *1959. május 14.*
15. Kiallítás helye: *Budapest*
16. Kiallítás aláírása: *Slagom János*
17. Kiallítás helye: *BUDAPEST*

AU-II. 469984

Personal police I.D., 1954

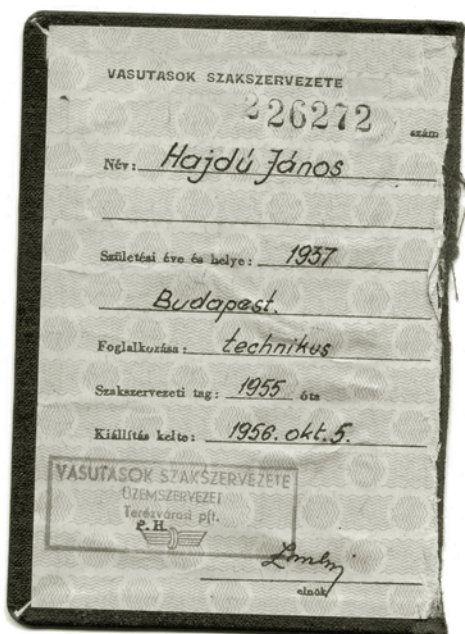
In June 1955 I matriculated, seventh in the class. How I managed to pass my exams in technical drawing, sub and super structure (both of which I hated!), I will never know. I found that it was impossible for me to go on to university, again due to my background and religion. Not knowing what to do and not having many alternatives, in August I started work as a labourer in a bridge-building factory on the banks of the River Danube.

The factory was situated at Boráros tér (square) under Petöfi Bridge. The work was very hard and included carrying steel girders (one of which fell on my foot and kept me off work for two weeks), welding and general bridge component repair work. The temperature during the winter of 1955/56 was at times as low as minus 25C, and as a result of this I suffered permanent frostbite to my fingers.

I found it difficult to adjust to these working conditions as I was the only educated (middle class) person there, from a totally different background from anybody else, and as a result I was regularly made fun of or verbally abused.

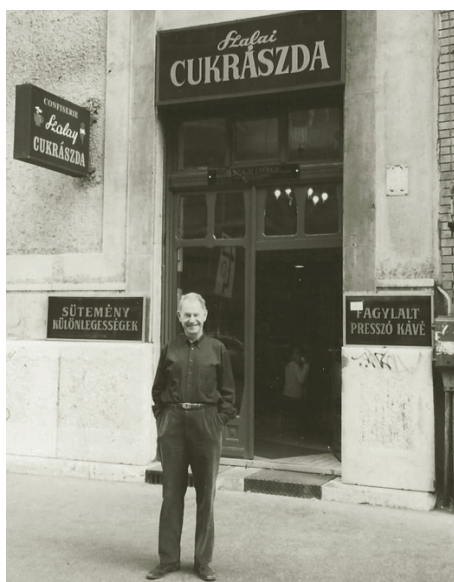
After some months, with the help of some friends, I was offered a temporary trainee job with the Hungarian Railways, Budapest branch, for the duration of the summer of 1956.

In September I was appointed technical assistant, supervising maintenance workers on the tracks just outside Budapest (Rakospalota-Ujpest), and was forced to join the railway workers' union. In addition, like everybody else, I had to have a personal I.D. document from the Railway Union. This tedious job involved walking the tracks every day checking the rails and points. It also meant that I had to start work early in the morning and commute by rail every day. Clearly this was a dead-end job and not something I wanted to consider as a career.



Railway Union booklet

In summer, one of the few affordable pastimes was to swim at one of the two pools on Margitsziget (the island on the Danube). The one nearer Margit Bridge, the Hajos Alfred pool, had one large pool outdoors and was used for international events. It was connected by a "swimming corridor" to the inside pool which was used throughout the year. The second and much bigger pool was the Palatinus Strand, further up the island. It had 3 thermal pools, a huge swimming pool and a smaller wave pool. There were table tennis tables at both. I remember walking from home along Pozsony ut on to Margit Bridge and eventually on to the island. It took about 30 minutes to the Hajos Alfred pool and 45 minutes to the Palatinus. I spent hours there swimming, meeting friends and playing table tennis, which (together with chess) was a very popular sport in Hungary. The way home in the heat seemed much longer, and to relieve the tedium I often stopped at Szalai Café on Pozsony ut for their famous ice cream. The shop is still there today, under the third generation of ownership.



Szalai Café, revisited in 2006

We never had any spare cash and, as far as I remember, our only entertainment was a visit to one of the two opera houses in town (where special cheap annual tickets were available), to museums, or to the cinema. At other times a few of us went to the open-air opera house on Margitsziget. Since the tickets here were too expensive for us to afford, we used to go in during the interval when some people were leaving and gave us their tickets, or we squeezed under the fence when no-one was looking. To my recollection, I must have seen about thirty operas and ballets. In the winter we went skating at the City Park (Varosliget) where the boating lake was turned into a skating rink. An excursion to Lake Balaton was quite an event, but in any case, as I suffered from severe hay fever, we only went there once.

During this period my mother worked as a carer and bookkeeper in a Hungarian Jewish Home in Budapest (1951/52) and then as an insurance sales person between 1952 and 1954. This involved travelling every day with a colleague who had a car, all over the country from farm to farm in all kinds of weather, trying to persuade farmers to insure their livestock at a time of poverty and uncertainty when insurance was not thought to be a priority. After two years she was completely exhausted and yet again looking for another job. A friend found her a position at a book publisher's as an agent and bookkeeper, where she worked from 1954 to 1956.

My aunt Iby married Kalman Gottesmann on 20th March 1955, but this marriage lasted only a very short time as they were incompatible.

REVOLUTION

I was still working on the Hungarian Railways when the Revolution broke out on 23rd October 1956. The sudden change of atmosphere on the streets was obvious and the gathering of crowds, the marching students and the smile on people's faces caught me and everybody else by complete surprise, since such events were not only unexpected but also totally unbelievable under the strict communist regime.

We heard that people (mainly students) were gathering at the radio station and found out later that a peaceful demonstration had turned into a bloody confrontation before the building was captured early next morning.

The students wanted to present their manifesto to the nation on the radio, asking for the formation of an independent Hungarian government, the withdrawal of Soviet troops and free elections, but this was not allowed to be broadcast and the security forces fired on the crowd. The government ministers warned people of a non-existent "enemy" and declared martial law, which incited the crowds even more, and the demonstrations continued. They pulled down the 50-foot statue of the Soviet leader, Stalin, at Stalin ter (square) as well as the many ornamental red stars on top of government buildings.

There were clashes between the Russians, stationed in Budapest, supported by the Hungarian secret police, and the protesting students and it was inevitable that shooting would break out sooner rather than later.

Contrary to the government's expectations, regular troops of the Hungarian army from various outlying districts started arriving in Budapest, but instead of fighting the people they offered their support and arms to the students. By 3 p.m. the government had no choice but to rescind martial law. It now became unsafe to go to work and even to walk the streets.

We ventured out only for short periods to buy food, especially since the block of flats I lived in was very near the Parliament building and also the secret police headquarters (which was also the Communist Party headquarters), only five minutes from our home.

On 24th October a new government was sworn in and Imre Nagy (who had spent years in jail) was appointed Prime Minister by Erno Gero, First Secretary of the Communist Party.

At the same time, unbeknown to us, the Russian army with their tanks was ordered into the city and told to shoot indiscriminately at anything that moved.

On the morning of 25th October citizens of Budapest, including many of the students, decided to go to Parliament ter to try to speak to Prime Minister Imre Nagy, unaware that Nagy was in fact being held prisoner at Party Headquarters and that in effect the Russians were now in full control.



Tanks in front of Parliament, October 1956

As they approached the square they noticed several Russian tanks stationed along the nearby streets. Since we only lived two blocks away, I also went there with a friend to see what was going on, having seen hundreds of people marching below our windows. We stood under the arcades, opposite the Parliament building.

After a little while we heard some shots from the other side of the square. The behaviour of the crowd made me uneasy and I did not feel comfortable with the situation, so we returned home - which saved our lives - and I only found out later what had actually happened.

Apparently, there were about 20,000 people in the square when the secret police started ordering them to disperse. When the crowd responded with angry shouts and did not move, armed police opened fire from the tops of surrounding buildings where they had been hiding for some time.



By the end of the day there were over 300 people dead in the square - but the final number would never be known. The shooting was clearly heard from our flat for quite some time. Although by the next day the police had cleared most of the square, pieces of clothing, shoes, other personal items and pools of blood were still to be seen everywhere.

Where my friend and I had been standing earlier, there would be bullet holes all over the wall and the columns of the arcade, which can still clearly be seen today.



Parlament ter showing bullet holes

By 26th October the whole city was littered with dead bodies among the many barricades. As the fighting intensified we could no longer sleep in our room (we only had one room which served as both the bedroom and living room area for my mother and me) and had to sleep on the bathroom floor, which was on the more protected inside of the block.

Two days later all major cities in the country were in the hands of the workers and students, and the Nagy government announced amazing and exciting new plans, including the renunciation of Soviet control, a declaration of independence and the immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops (this was confirmed by the Soviet government).



Hungarian students on a tank during the Revolution, October 1956



A street in Budapest, during the Revolution

The two radio stations were now called Free Kossuth (political leader and reformer during the 1848/9 Hungarian Revolutionary years) and Free Petöfi (one of Hungary's greatest poets, and key figure during the 1848 Revolution) Radio. Hopes for a free Hungary were very high.

On 30th October Imre Nagy announced the end of the one-party system and the return of a coalition government. On the 31st Cardinal Mindszenty, Catholic Primate of Hungary, and many other political prisoners were set free after years in jail.

On 1st November Hungary declared neutrality and the communist party was disbanded.

Unfortunately, all these announcements, promises and changes meant absolutely nothing. On 3rd November large Russian troop movements were reported from all over the country.

More and more barricades were built using building material, disabled tanks and other army vehicles. Defences were put up all over the city. It was becoming increasingly clear that the revolution

would be short lived and quashed by the large number of Russian troops now approaching the capital.

At this point the Russians agreed to negotiate with the freedom fighters raising hopes of peace, but almost immediately they broke their word as well as the ceasefire and started bombing Pest from the Buda Hills.

At dawn on Sunday 4th November the armoured Russian troops with tanks entered Budapest from all sides: we heard the guns from 5 a.m. and throughout the day.

Prime Minister Nagy spoke on the radio at 5.20 a.m. announcing to the world the illegal entry of the Russians and asking for urgent overseas help. The message was then repeated in several languages.

The ferocity of the Hungarians' fighting spirit surprised the Russians, who had no option but to withdraw from Budapest to everybody's joy. This "victory", however, turned out to be short lived.

The Russians returned and there was intense house-to-house fighting all over Budapest, causing many casualties. There was very little anybody could do against the large number of Russian troops (many of whom came from the Asian Republics of the Soviet Union, following orders, but not knowing where they were or why they were fighting) with guns and tanks, and soon the communists were once again in charge and the Nagy government had fallen.

The city was in ruins, buildings collapsed or were on fire, burnt-out buses and trams were scattered everywhere, shops were looted. The next few days were confused and depressing and nobody knew what to do. We realised that life henceforth would be much harder, especially for the middle classes and students.

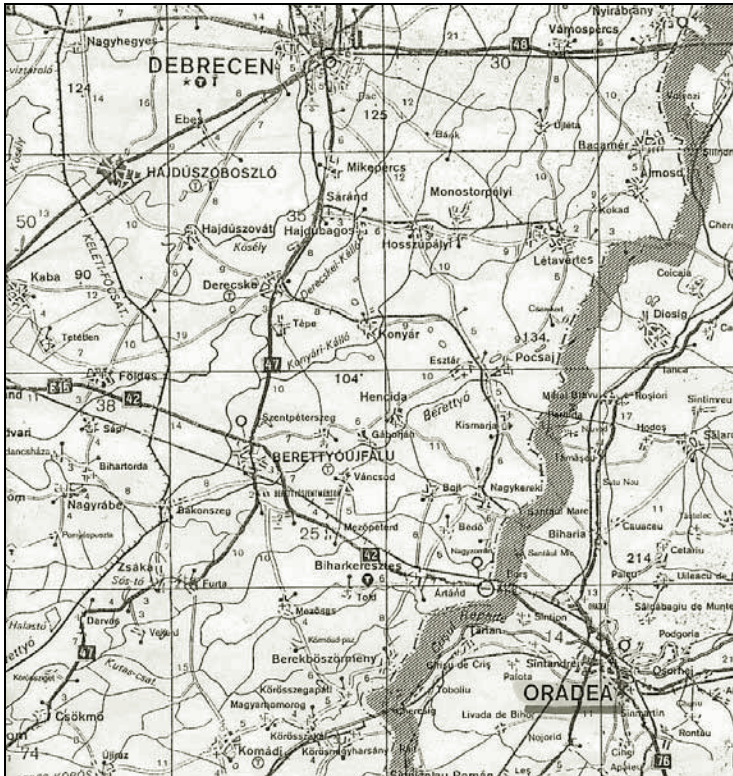
While people were queuing for food they were quite often shot at in the streets and it was dangerous to move around the town. The communists were looking for scapegoats and at the slightest provocation people were suddenly arrested on the pretext (true or false) of having fought against the Russians, and they were never seen again. Nobody was safe.

Janos Kadar was elected General Secretary of the Hungarian Communist Party in October 1956. He was a member of the Nagy government, but left for Moscow on 4th November. He was told to return immediately and form a new government, and was in power until 1988.

Approximately 2,500 freedom fighters and civilians died during the revolution. Over 20,000 were put on trial by the Kadar government, approximately 10,000 were imprisoned and 300 executed.

We found out later that after the Revolution had been crushed, Imre Nagy was given sanctuary at the Yugoslav Embassy. He was later guaranteed safe conduct by Kadar, but when he left the Embassy on 22nd November he was arrested by the Soviet forces and imprisoned. He was subsequently secretly tried for treason, found guilty and executed on 17th June 1958.

ESCAPE



Oradea, Romania

At this time we started hearing rumours that, taking advantage of the chaos, people were escaping the country. Due to the confused situation, the disorganised transport system and a lack of control at the border, it was possible to get to the border without being challenged and in some places on the Austro-Hungarian border to simply walk across to Austria without being stopped. Suddenly messages were being received from those who had left, confirming that they had got through successfully.

After a few days' discussion and weighing up the situation and our future in Hungary, my mother and I came to the conclusion that we had nothing to lose and had therefore no alternative but to try to escape. Finally, my mother, my best friend, Peter Szabados, and I decided to make a bid for freedom on 20th November 1956.

It was not easy to accept that we had to leave everything behind. We took two small holdalls containing a few items of clothing, a little food and my Teddy (which I still have), locked the door of our flat and left. I found out later that the contents of the flat were divided between aunt Iby and my father.



Peter arranged for us to stay the night with one of his friends who lived near the Southern Railway station (23 Fadrusz utca), which meant that next morning we only had to walk a short distance to catch a train. Since I was officially still working on the railways, I had a free pass and some free tickets, which I gave to Peter and my mother.

a jogosultság további fennállását a
 szolgálati főnök a hónap rovatában ha-
 vonta aláírásával és a szolgálati hely
 bélyegzőjével igazolni köteles. A szol-
 gálati főnök a jogosultságot az évköz-
 ben kiállított menetjegyen is, csak a
 kiállítást követő hónapban köteles ig-
 azolni.

Az igazolványt érvényessége lejártá-
 után vissza kell szolgáltatni. Ennek el-
 mulasztása esetén 30.- Ft térítést kel-
 lőzneti.

KIÁLLÍTOTTA:
1956. SZEP 17

A kiállító szolgálati hely bélyegzője
 és a szolgálati főnök aláírása:

MAGYAR ÁLLAMVASUTAK
 Pályafenntartási főnöksége
 Budapest-Terézváros

A tulajdonos aláírása:

BUDAPEST
 arcképes igazolványhoz
 és vissza személyvonalra

XX. sz. m. - Máv. jegynyomda 1955-2199.

Free ticket on Hungarian Railways

2
 ZIRC (Dinnyés át)
 BAKATONFÜRED
 BAL-SZÁRSZÓ
 GYÖR PAKS
 SZAKÁLY-HÜGYÉSZ

2
 ZIRC (Dinnyés át)
 BAKATONFÜRED
 BAL-SZÁRSZÓ
 GYÖR PAKS
 SZAKÁLY-HÜGYÉSZ

2443
 6 13 A
 2napig érvényes
 Budapest-Kelenföld
 Személyv. Fapados
 33:20 1/2 16:00

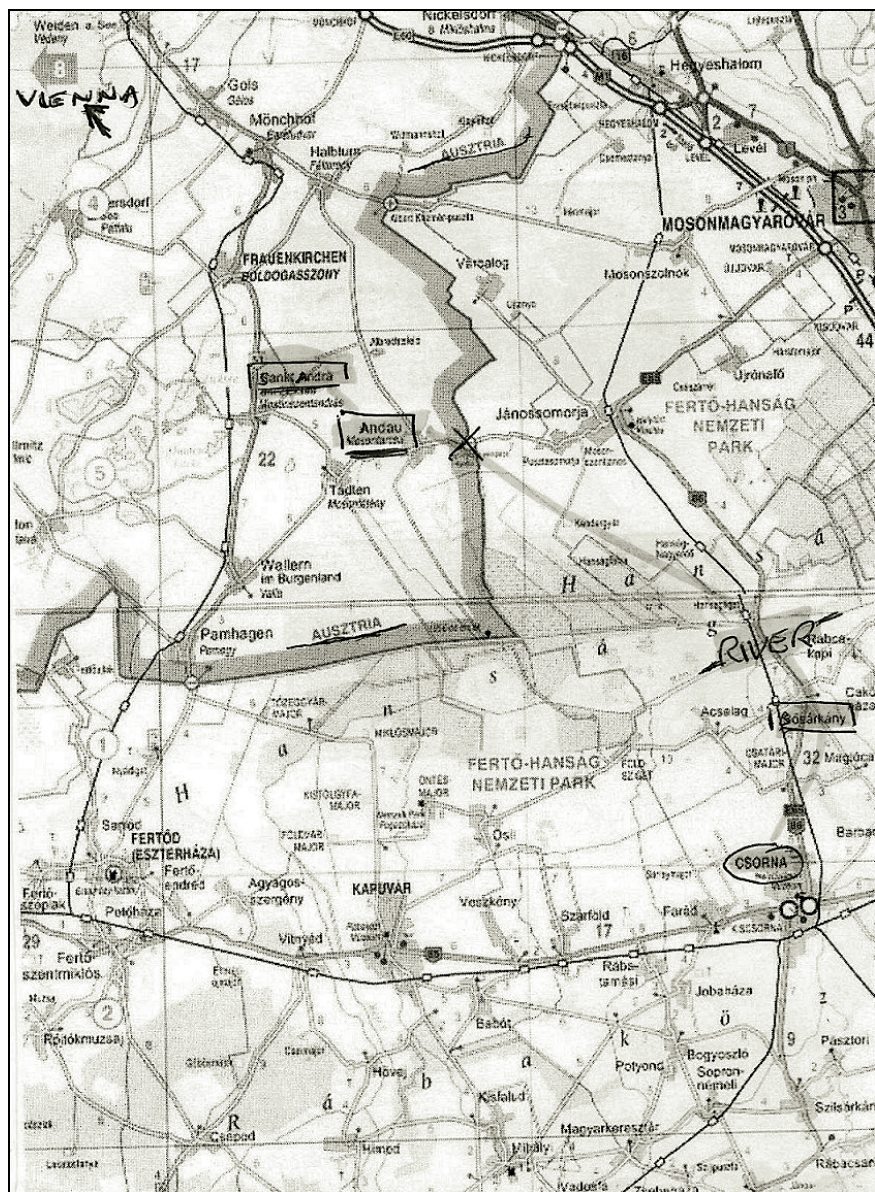
2napig érvényes
 Budapest-Kelenföld
 Személyv. Fapados
 33:20 1/2 16:00

6 13 A
 2443

Rail ticket to freedom

The day before our departure we said goodbye to my father, aunt Iby, uncle Rezso, our close friends and relatives. Naturally, this had to be done in person, or in coded messages on the phone, to avoid being betrayed by some stranger overhearing our conversation. It was a well-known fact that telephone conversations were monitored.

We had to cross one of the bridges over the Danube before dark, since all the bridges were guarded day and night and anybody who looked suspicious or carried luggage was stopped and interrogated. We left by train at 6 a.m. of 21st November in the direction of the Austrian border. At Kelenfold railway station just outside Budapest the train was halted, and we had to wait for three hours not knowing what was causing the delay and fearing that the secret police were checking passengers' identity.



Map showing escape route from Hungary

We knew that the stations near the border would be guarded, therefore we got off the train just past the town of Győr at Csorna, still some way from the border, and started walking around 3 p.m. towards Bosarkany. As we progressed we found to our surprise that there were many others alone or in small groups going the same way with the same aim in mind.

Since we did not know which way to go, we had to take a chance and ask the local peasants. They were of course fully aware of our intentions and were only too happy to help and keep silent (we hoped) in exchange for money, jewellery or other personal belongings.

As we continued and it got darker our party grew in number to twenty, all of us bewildered and frightened but determined to get out of Hungary.

It was a clear, icy night and we were getting increasingly tired and cold. As we got nearer to the border our route became more difficult and dangerous. We had to avoid the main roads, cutting across fields and several times squatting or lying in the icy mud to avoid parties of soldiers using searchlights and the tanks and other armoured vehicles looking for escapees. We soon realised that the early days of easy escape and simply walking over the border were over and that the border guards had been strengthened in number.



Escaping Hungary, 1956

By this time it was around midnight, the moon was shining and the only possible way forward was over a small river (Bosarkany Lock) without a bridge. Eventually we found some slippery and frozen pipes spanning the river, which we managed to clamber over to reach the other side.

The area we now entered was mined and we knew that we were very near the end of our journey, but also that this was going to be the most dangerous part. At the end of the next field we noticed a bridge guarded by a watchtower, which quite clearly was the point of entry into Austria.



Escaping Hungary, 1956

Having watched the area for some time, we realised that by great good fortune the tower was not occupied and that the lookouts were temporarily off duty. We then decided to take a chance and approached.

AUSTRIA



Bridge at Andau, as it looks today

Although we were terrified at every step we took, we crossed the bridge over the Einser Canal and entered Austria unharmed. Having walked approximately forty kilometres that day and night, we now saw headlights from cars and searchlights guiding us to safety.

We heard the shouts of the Austrians waiting for us at the village of Andau where we arrived at 2.30 a.m. on 22nd November 1956.

We were welcomed by the Red Cross and other Austrian and international organisations. We were given hot tea and something to eat and spent the rest of the night sleeping on hay spread out on the floor of a local restaurant. Next day (23rd November) we were told that we would be transferred to a nearby village and were asked to board the waiting fleet of coaches and cars.

We understood that all those waiting would be taken to the same place. My mother got on a coach, but by the time Peter and I tried to get on it was full and we were told to get in a car, just behind the coach. Unbeknown to us we were taken to a different destination and so unfortunately we were split up.

We found ourselves at the village of St. Andreas which was used as a transit station, where we were given food, clothing and blankets and where we spent the night.

This is where we found out that not everybody was as fortunate as we had been: some were blown up by mines, some shot by the guards, some drowned in the river while trying to cross it further along the border and some were arrested and taken back to Budapest and to prison.

It seems that, by chance, we had found one of the few crossings without a guard and where it was safe to cross the river. It is estimated that nearly 200,000 Hungarians fled the country.



Army camp in Solbad Hall Austria

At dawn next morning (24th November) we were taken to the railway station from where the train took us via Pandorf to Vienna (where at the Westbahnhof we were welcomed with hot sausages and bread), before we continued via Linz to Solbad Hall near Innsbruck, where we arrived in the morning of 25th November. We found ourselves in a previously disused army camp, which had been turned into a refugee camp for 500 Hungarians.

We were well looked after but the conditions were basic, with about forty of us to each dormitory, with bunk beds and communal toilet facilities, and we were given second-hand clothing collected by the locals and some pocket money.

Naturally, because of the large numbers and the inexperienced volunteer staff, we had to spend much of our time queuing for everything.



At the Barracks in Solbad Hall

Peter and I started to look for work and I found a temporary job as a builder's/plumber's mate in the village. We were often invited to the homes of local families for lunch or dinner and attended various local social gatherings, many of them arranged especially for us.

At the same time my mother was taken to Vienna and found a job as an interpreter in the registry office for refugees at the Austrian Joint Distribution Committee's offices. She immediately started looking for us, not just through this office but also through

the Home Office and in newspapers, which reported on all the new refugee camps throughout Austria. Due to the sudden influx of so many Hungarian refugees our camp had not yet been registered in Vienna and, in any case, by this time there were nearly 200 camps in the country and tracing anybody was not an easy matter.

It was only on 20th December that my mother found out where I was and managed to get in touch with me by phoning the camp office. As soon as she had confirmation of our whereabouts she was able to get hold of some train tickets and came to Solbad Hall on 27th December.

After some discussion it was agreed that next day we would travel to Vienna, but Peter Szabados decided not to join us and stayed behind and later set up home in the village.

Landesministerium für Inneres
Abteilung 12 U

*) Reichs- u. Volksdeutsche(r)
*) Fremdsprachige(r) Ausländer

Gilt nicht als Fahrausweis!
(Vor Antritt der Reise Fahrkarten bzw. Gepäckschein lösen!)

Gutschein N^o 68640

über Fahrgeld und Gepäckfrachttundung.

Von Solbad-Hall nach Wien

Personen über 10 Jahre
Personen von 4-10 Jahre
Personen-*) Zug 2 Kl.
Schnell-*)
kg Gepäck *)
kg Expressgut *)
(Güterwagen *)
Küchenwagen *)
Lazarettwagen *)

von Solbad-Hall nach Wien
über Wien
Reisezweck: Einreise nach Wien


Train ticket from Solbad Hall to Vienna

On arrival in Vienna on 28th December we were allocated and taken to a room in a small, seedy hotel (Hotel Franzenshof in Grosse Stadtgutgasse, in District 2, that was frequented by prostitutes). The room was paid for by the Austrian Joint Distribution Committee, which looked after refugees and also provided us with vouchers for lunches to be taken at the City University.

<h1>HOTEL FRANZENSHOF</h1> <p>WIEN, II. BEZIRK, GROSSE STADTGUTGASSE 19</p> <p>FERNSPRECH-NUMMER R-45-5-27</p> <hr/> <p>FLIESENDES KALT- UND WARM- WASSER IN DEN ZIMMERN</p> <hr/>
--

Boarding House allocated to John Hajdu in Vienna

The Red Cross gave us pocket money of 30 Schillings a week [see enclosed Austrian police certificate with stamps showing the number of times I was given 30 Schillings and the hotel card].

<p>Bundes-Polizeidirektion Wien Abteilung I</p> <p>I - 42.119/56 res</p> <p><i>Noch nicht überprüft</i></p>	<p>Hajdu Janos, Student, geb. am 29.4.1937 in Budapest, zu: tzt wohnhaft in Ungarn</p> <p>hat am 29. Dezember 1956 in der Bundes-Polizeidirektion Wien</p>
<p>um Gewährung des Asylrechtes angesucht.</p> <p>Die vorstehenden Personaldaten beruhen auf den nicht überprüften Angaben des Inhabers.</p> <p>Die Bescheinigung verliert ihre Gültigkeit als Ausweisungspapier am 1. März 1957</p> <p>Ausgestellt am 29. Dezember 1956.</p>	
<p style="text-align: right;">  </p>	

Vienna police I.D., December 1956

Following several unsuccessful visits to the British Embassy we were finally told that we could start queuing outside the Embassy from the morning of 30th January with several hundred other hopefuls [see queue stamps given by the Embassy, in order to seek permission to emigrate to England].



***Queue number at
British Embassy in
Vienna, 30th January
1957***

In the queue we met an old friend from Budapest, Stephen Fritz, whose father had been in Mauthausen concentration camp with my mother. We were warned that Britain, like all other countries, allowed in a certain quota of refugees only and also that it could take days to get through the Embassy gates; even then we might not be successful.

In the meantime my mother had been asked to continue working in Vienna (should we not be successful in emigrating) with the Austrian Joint Distribution Committee for Refugees.

After six days of queuing we were eventually admitted on 5th February and fortunately given permission to enter Britain. We were given two hours to get back to the hotel, pack what little we had and catch a "Red Cross" train leaving at 3.15 p.m. from the Westbahnhof, for Ostend and Dover.

It was later confirmed that 80,000 Hungarians ended up in North America, 22,000 in Britain (where 14,000 settled permanently), 16,000 in Germany, 17,000 in Austria, 14,000 in Switzerland, 13,000 in France and 10,000 in Australia.

ENGLAND

Having never before travelled outside Hungary, the train journey seemed just like a dream. It was difficult to comprehend what had happened to us: we had escaped from Hungary, lived in Austria for a few weeks, and here we were now, going to a country we had only dreamt about in the past.

Since I spoke some English I was asked to act as interpreter on the train and later on the boat to communicate with several hundred Hungarian refugees who did not speak the language. The train travelled through Austria, Germany and Belgium arriving at Ostend at midday where we transferred to the boat which took us to Dover.



*On the way to a new life,
6th February 1957*

We saw England for the first time in our lives at around 5.30 on the afternoon of 6th February and arrived at Victoria Station at 8 p.m., where we were transferred by bus to Euston Station. We left at midnight for Stafford, arriving there at 4 a.m. on 7th February 1957.

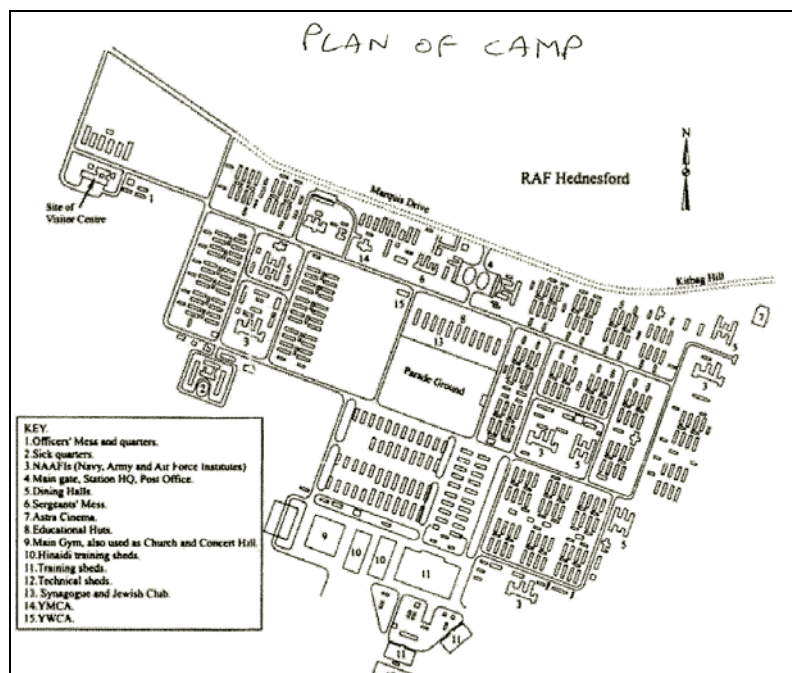
1
Date of arrival 7.2.57 at Hednesford Reception Centre
British Council for Aid to Refugees
Hud 110
133
HUNGARIAN REFUGEE DEPARTMENT
Carlton Hotel - Haymarket
London, S.W.1
PERSONAL REGISTRATION FORM (To be completed by people of 16 years and over)
Surname) Vezetéknév 147204 Surname
First Name) Keresztnev 72403 Vezetéknév
Sex) Nem M POLICE Registration No.
Date and place of birth 29-4-37 Budapest
Születési év és hely 29-4-37
Nationality) Nemzetiség Hung.
Passport No. or Identitv Papers
Utlevél száma vagy más okmány
Religion) Vallás JEW
Occupation) Foglalkozás ENGINEERING TECHNICAL COLLEGE STUDENT
Married or single SINGLE
Családi állapota, nos, notlen
Languages spoken ENGLISH
Idegen nyelvet beszél

Arrival at Hednesford Camp, 2nd February 1957

A reception committee was waiting for us and we were taken by bus to a large disused Royal Air Force training camp (built in 1938) near Hednesford on Cannock Chase, our first home in this country. Within ten days of closing down, it was reopened for use as a resettlement camp for Hungarian refugees (800 in total).



Hednesford Camp



Plan of Hednesford Camp

The majority of refugees stayed in communal dormitories, but since both Stephen Fritz and I spoke English and so could be useful, we two with my mother were allocated, as a special privilege, a separate section of our hut (No. 133) that had more privacy.

Stephen and I were two of the very few refugees who were employed as permanent interpreters to help with matters relating to the wellbeing of all those in the camp. We had to help with onward transportation, finding jobs, looking for relatives, appointments with doctors and attending meetings with various visiting officials.



*Cannock Chase, Hednesford,
outside our hut, February 1957*

It was also our job to go to the railway station at 4 a.m. twice a week to welcome new groups of Hungarian refugees arriving along the same route that we had travelled. We had to take them round the camp, show them the facilities, explain the rules and generally help them settle in. By this time my mother had also found voluntary work in the administration block. Although our work was very interesting and exciting, it was naturally only temporary and the only recreational facilities were the camp cinema or a walk in the woods on Cannock Chase. There was no transportation available, so we couldn't even go to the nearest village. As this was only a transit camp we all knew that sooner or later everybody would be moved on to other camps or to permanent homes.

Due to the fact that I had got to know the various organisations and officers in the camp, I soon found out that the British Council for Aid to Refugees arranged for a very small group to be sent to an Elizabethan stately home near East Grinstead in Sussex.

It seemed an ideal place to recuperate from our ordeal and also to travel up to London to look for somewhere to live and work. I was able to register my mother, Stephen and myself as members of this group and having spent nearly a month in the camp, we left at 9.30 a.m. on 2nd March 1957 by coach for our new home.

We arrived at Rowfant House in Worth, near East Grinstead and Crawley, at 6 p.m. This was my first view of a real stately home and it was exactly how we imagined England to be!



Rowfant House, 1957

This impressive mansion was surrounded by beautiful grounds, a forest and a lake, and there was complete peace and quiet. The house had accommodation for about forty people and we were the last ones to arrive. We were allocated a room for the three of us and given plenty of time to recuperate and consider our future.



Rowfant House - with mother in 1957, and revisited in 2013

On 5th March we decided to take the train (the branch line station, now closed, was just 5 minutes' walk away) to London for the first time and to see the capital we had read so much about.

We were apprehensive, not knowing our way around, and at the same time we walked about as in a dream, surrounded by so many strange people. We were of course completely lost but the experience was unforgettable. After this visit we travelled to London several times, but since we had very little money we had to walk everywhere.

We were advised to make contact with the Hungarian Jewish Refugees Committee, which I did on 20th March and made arrangements to visit their offices. They were very encouraging and promised to help me move to London by getting in touch with the authorities responsible for giving me a possible grant should I wish to enter university. At that stage, despite the fact that I had not enjoyed my earlier studies, I intended to continue my higher education to become a railway engineer.

While staying at Rowfant House I accompanied fellow Hungarians to doctors, dentists and various job interviews to towns all over England, helping them to make themselves understood and getting their problems sorted out. This was very helpful, as I started to learn about the country and the people and also improved my English.

On 21st March my mother was offered a job as an assistant cook at the Dedisham convalescent nursery home for children at Slinfold, near Horsham at £4 per week.

She took this job, even though she knew that she would be totally isolated in the middle of the countryside, with limited knowledge of the language and local customs and a long way from me. She found this very hard and accepted the job on a short-term basis in order to earn some money.

It soon became obvious that if I wanted to settle down and achieve anything I would have to move to London, and having discussed this with my friend Stephen, who agreed with me, I arranged a further meeting with the Jewish Refugees Committee who found a room for us very quickly. They also provided us with bedding, furniture and basic necessities and gave me a voucher for £10 to buy myself a suit at Burtons!!

On 29th March Stephen and I moved first to 18 Station Parade and than to 93 St Gabriel Road, in Cricklewood, London, NW2, where we stayed only long enough to find more permanent accommodation.

Case No. 44-389		H.O. Ref.		JEWISH REFUGEES COMMITTEE		DUPLICATE	
Surname HAJDU							
Other Names JANOS		Address 103 [illegible] [illegible]		Phone No. [illegible]			
Date of Birth 29 4 1917		Nationality		Born at R. D. A. East		If Orthodox	
Address in Germany		Date of arrival in England 2 1957		PERMIT Valid for			
Married		Husband <input type="checkbox"/> Wife <input type="checkbox"/> Not in England					
Relatives or Friends in England (Stating Financial Position)		Number of Children		Born at		Age	
				Sex		Status	
In England		Amount		Country			
Means .. Germany							
Elsewhere							
OCCUPATION in Germany		RAILWAY TECHNICIAN					
(In full detail)							
USRP		USRP rec. card submitted to HIAS Paris-10.1.58.				Experience	
Alternative Occupation							
Languages		ENGLISH					
If registered by any other Refugee Committees				Passport Expires		[illegible]	
LEFT ENGLAND FOR				ON		[illegible]	
Date of Interview		Part of Arrival		Nature of Hospitality		Money Grants	
[illegible]		[illegible]		[illegible]		[illegible]	
14-3-57 Interviewed		[illegible]		[illegible]		[illegible]	
20.3. Called. Would like to come to England. He promises to take him out. He promises to look for a house.		[illegible]		[illegible]		[illegible]	
27.3.57. Arranged for James Hajdu to be taken out of the camp on Friday 18 Station Parade, N.W.2. Employment arranged with Grosvenor House Hotel as collarman/porter next week. Given voucher No. 82 to shelter for bedding and towel.		[illegible]		[illegible]		[illegible]	

*Jewish Refugees Committee document,
regarding accommodation and job*

On 10th May we were offered a room each, just round the corner at 103 Ashford Court, Ashford Road still in Cricklewood, on the 8th floor, at the home of Mr & Mrs Holden, and we moved in immediately.

I was still not sure of the first step I should take in my career in England, and in April, as a stopgap, again with the help of the Jewish Refugees Committee, I took a job as a cellarman/porter at the Grosvenor House Hotel in Park Lane [see my business CV]. There I had to work in the fourth and fifth basements carrying wine bottles from the stores to the various bars in the hotel, finishing work around midnight most nights. I was earning £5 per week, but with regular overtime this was increased to £7.

During the weekends I had a chance to visit my mother, which involved train and local bus journeys. It was clear that she was unhappy and wanted to move to London as soon as possible.

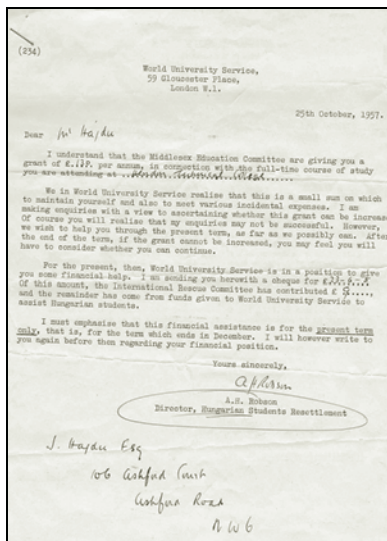
It was proving very difficult to settle down to life in London, since I did not have any friends or acquaintances, did not understand the customs and traditions and my English, whilst adequate, was not yet fluent enough for everyday life. It took some months before I could even afford a small radio.

In May my mother finally found a job in Edgware, north London, as a temporary mother's help, with the Benedict family where she stayed for just over a month, and on 19th June she was also able to take a room in Ashford Court next to mine.

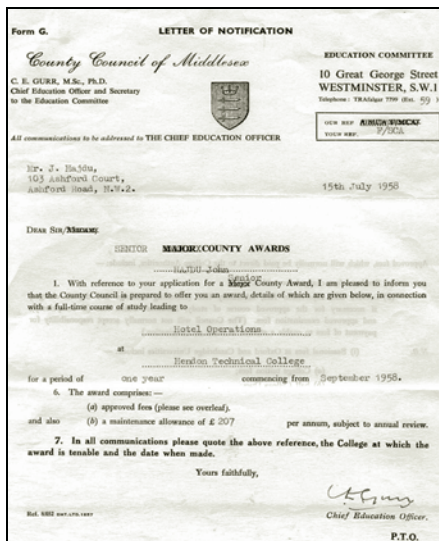
Finally, by this time I realised that my heart was not in the engineering profession, having found to my surprise that I enjoyed working in a hotel, where I could communicate with people. I therefore had to explain to the College where I had already been interviewed and given a grant, that I had changed my mind and decided to apply for a place in a catering college.

After a further meeting with the HJRC they agreed to get in touch with the Middlesex Education Department, and with their help I was accepted as a full-time student at the Hendon Technical College in The Burroughs, Hendon, North London (now part of Middlesex University) to start a two-year course in September 1957.

In the meantime, I decided to continue working at the Grosvenor House and was promoted to assistant (commis) waiter. Later I was moved to the kitchen as a commis chef and eventually I worked as a porter in the Grosvenor Apartments, behind the hotel. At the same time I had to find a grant to support me while attending college.



Grant from World University Service, 1957



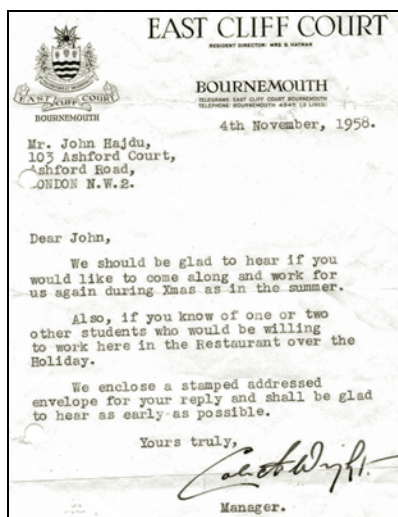
Financial support to study at Hendon Technical College, 1958- 59

I was able to secure a comparatively large grant from the local, Middlesex Council (£130 per annum in the first year and £207 in the second), partly due to the fact that, by chance, the officer in charge at the Council was also Hungarian who had come to London many years earlier. In addition, I received an extra grant of £23 from the World University Service Hungarian students' resettlement department. I received a supplementary grant from the Hungarian Jewish Refugees Committee who, apart from these regular payments, also helped me with occasional additional payments. Two of those working at the Committee, Mrs Roth and Mrs Edith Singer, became personal friends.

At this time my mother, who was still looking for a permanent position, changed her job and started working in the kitchens of the Westbury Hotel off Bond Street, at £6 per week.

On 23rd September 1957 I started a two-year full-time Hotel and Catering course at the Hendon Technical College, in the Catering Department, where I was the oldest student by several years. I soon found out how difficult it was to study in English such subjects as mathematics, English, nutrition, economics, hotel management and many others. I had to use textbooks, take dictation and make notes all in a language in which I was not fluent enough. I therefore decided to enrol at an English language school for evening classes.

My mother moved to live and work with a family in Lindfield Gardens in Hampstead, looking after their children and helping with general house work.



Working as a waiter in Bournemouth, November 1958

In the first vacation period at Christmas (24th December 1957 to 4th January 1958) I went back to work in the kitchen at the Grosvenor House to earn some extra money. At the end of the first year at College, the mother of the only other Jewish student in my class, Laurence, arranged for both of us to work (I as a waiter) at the (Jewish) East Cliff Hotel in Bournemouth from 20th July to 20th September, 1958, earning £5 per week. It was a steep learning curve with many mishaps on the way! The package included free accommodation (shared with other staff) and meals. [Having lost contact with Laurence in the meantime, I was amazed to hear from him in Australia via Facebook in January 2013 after 55 years!]



*Working as a commis chef at
Grosvenor House*

During the summer my mother moved again, this time to be a companion to an elderly lady in Brondesbury (Waverley Court), and then on 27th September she started work as a cashier at the Berkeley Hotel in central London.

Just after I started my second year at college (20th September 1958) my mother and I decided that we could now just about afford to rent some rooms, and we moved into the upstairs flat at 64 Brent Street, in Brent, north London on 1st November (rent £4 per week to be paid weekly). This was our first permanent home, despite not having much privacy as our landlady lived downstairs.

Since this was an unfurnished flat, we turned to the HJRC once again, who agreed to give us £20 and provided second hand furniture. The two flats did not have separate entrances and the landlady could watch everything we did, often telling us off for making too much noise when we invited a few friends.

In the Christmas holiday from 29th December for two weeks I again found a job, this time as a waiter at the Queens Hotel in Eastbourne, working under miserable conditions, staying in a freezing cold attic, but at least making a little extra money (£3 per day including accommodation, sharing a room with three others at the top of the hotel, and meals and a rail ticket) and picking up some experience.



Working as a waiter, 1958



EMPIRE HOTELS—

BAILEY'S HOTEL - LONDON
CALVERLEY HOTEL - TUNBRIDGE WELLS
GRAND HOTEL - BRIGHTON
GRAND HOTEL - SCARBOROUGH
MARSHAM COURT - BOURNEMOUTH
QUEEN'S HOTEL - EASTBOURNE
ROYAL CLARENCE HOTEL - EXETER
WATKINS HOTEL - WORTHING
YE OLDE BULL'S HEAD HOTEL - AYLESBURY

Queen's Hotel,
Eastbourne.

Telephone: 2800.

Telegrams: Queen's, Eastbourne.

THURSDAY
18th December, 1958.

Mr. J.P. Hajdu,
64 Brent Street,
LONDON, W.4.

Dear Sir,

Christmas, 1958.

Further to your interview with our Head Waiter yesterday, I would now confirm your engagement as Station Waiter during the Christmas period.

I would be pleased if you would commence duty at 12.00 mid-day on Wednesday 29th December.

The wage would be £3.- per day (£15.- for the period) which would include accommodation and meals and we will be prepared to refund to you the return fare London/Eastbourne.

I would be pleased if you would confirm in writing that the above is in order by return of post, and trust that the arrangements will be to our mutual advantage.

Yours faithfully,

Working as a waiter in Eastbourne Christmas 1958

Mother and I soon realised that our flat was much too small, and being on the main road it was also noisy and dirty. We decided to look for something a little better in the same area. We had hardly any money and we had to think very carefully whether we could afford this move.

Eventually we found a self-contained flat to rent in a small block at the back of Brent Cross underground station and moved on 27th February 1959 to 21 Oakfield Court, Hendon Way, north London (annual rent of £221).

USE ONLY
Edition 1
opened
22.5.1959

H.M. LAND REGISTRY
TITLE NUMBER MX57245
This register consists of 2 pages.

A. PROPERTY REGISTER
containing the description of the registered land and the estate comprised in the Title

COUNTY OR COUNTY BOROUGH: MIDDLESEX PARISH: HENDON

The Leasehold land demised by the Lease referred to below registered on 22 May 1959 which lies within the area edged red on the plan of the above Title filed at the Registry and comprises Plot Number 21, Oakfield Court, Hendon Way, on the second floor. *FIRST FLAT OF ONE OWN IN ENGLAND !!*

SHORT PARTICULARS OF LEASE UNDER WHICH THE LAND IS HELD

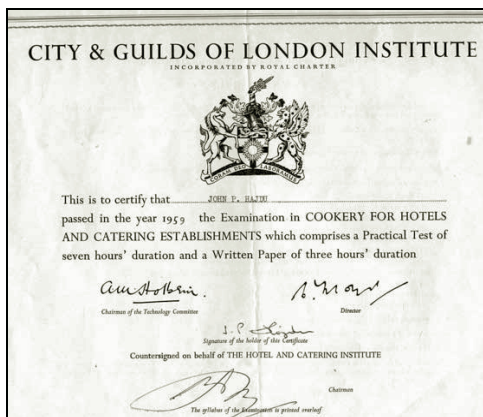
DATE	PARTIES	YEARS	FROM	RENT
9.3.1959	1. Denbigh Estates Limited. 2. Livia Franks and John Paul Hajdu.	22	9.3.1959.	£221.

NOTE 1:-The lease contains a prohibition against alienation without license and all estates, rights, interests, powers and remedies under the lease at any time arising upon or by reason of such alienation are excepted from the effect of registration.

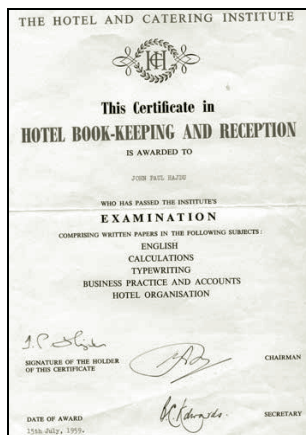
NOTE 2:-Lessor's Title registered under MX10539.

First home, at £221 rent

My next step was to apply for a passport, as I had decided to go to Europe in the spring holidays. On 26th March I left the flat and started on my first overseas holiday trip, on my own, partly by train and partly hitchhiking, as I had very little money to spend and hitchhiking was safe and popular at this time. I visited Cologne, Bonn, Duisburg, Krefeld, Oberhausen, Minden and finally Hamburg.

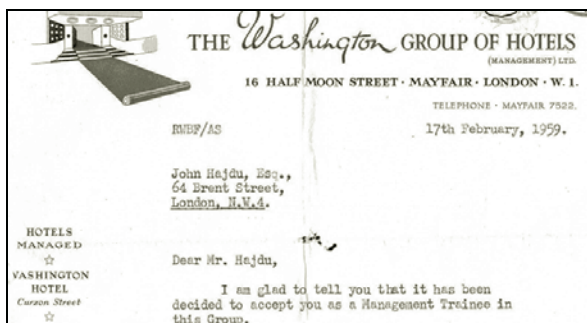


Final cookery exam, 1959



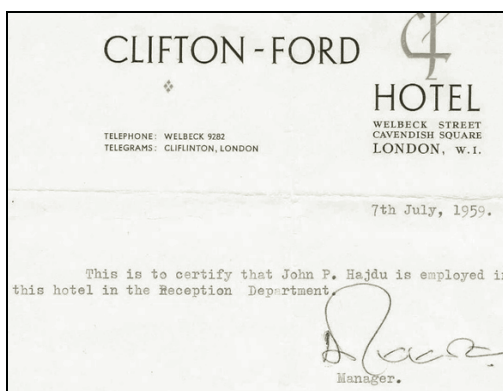
Final exams, June 1959

At the end of two years of study I passed all my exams in June 1959: cooking (practical and theory), waiting, nutrition, accounts, book-keeping, typing and various other subjects relating to the hotel and catering industry [see all reports, certificates and exam details from the College, in a separate file].



Start work in the Washington Group, February 1959

As a result, I was recommended by the Principal to join the Washington Group of Hotels, which was the precursor of Grand Metropolitan Hotels. An interview was set up and I received confirmation that I could start work immediately as a management trainee.



Employed at the Clifton Ford, July 1959

My first “proper” job as a management trainee was in June at St Ermin’s Hotel in Caxton Street SW1, and a few weeks later I was transferred to the Clifton Ford Hotel (now called Marylebone Hotel), Welbeck Street W1 as a Reception Clerk earning about £6 and 6 shillings per week. I was moved to the Mandeville Hotel, Mandeville Place, on 9th November where I worked in the Control Office.

On 1st March, 1960 I was moved again, this time to the Stratford Court Hotel (now called Radisson Edwardian) in Oxford Street, where first I worked in the Control Office and later in Reception, becoming shift leader and then Reception Manager, earning £9 and 15 shillings per week.



*Working as a Receptionist at
Stratford Court Hotel, Oxford Street*

Having previously exchanged letters regularly with my father, Gyorgy, who by then was a director of the Hungarian State Life Insurance Company, I found out from his wife that on 6th October he had died in Budapest, aged 51, after a long illness, having suffered from cancer and cirrhosis of the kidney.

In September 1962 I was asked to transfer to the sales department in Head Office (at £17 per week) and that was where my long career in sales and marketing started [for further details, see Appendix I]. While working for the Washington Group of Hotels I joined the group table tennis team and also took part in many car rallies, winning several trophies in both sports.

Certificate No. **BNA 72739** Hess Office No. 75,610,701.



BRITISH NATIONALITY ACT, 1948.

CERTIFICATE OF NATURALISATION

Whereas *John Paul Highton known as John Paul Haight*

has applied to one of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State for a certificate of naturalisation, alleging with respect to *himself* the particulars set out below, and has satisfied the Secretary of State that the conditions laid down in the British Nationality Act, 1948, for the grant of a certificate of naturalisation are fulfilled:

Now, therefore, the Secretary of State, in pursuance of the powers conferred upon him by said Act, grants to the said

John Paul Haight known as John Paul Haight

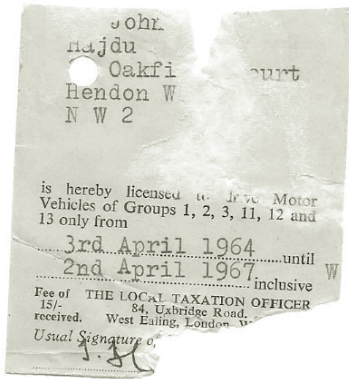
this Certificate of Naturalisation, and declares that upon taking the Oath of Allegiance within the time and in the manner required by the regulations made in that behalf to shall be a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies as from the date of this certificate.

In witness whereof I have hereto subscribed my name this *3rd* day of *September 1962.*

William Hingman

HOME OFFICE,
LONDON.

80



First driving licence



First car, 1963 - 671 FLN

I bought my first car, a Mini, registration number 671 FLN, on the 19th August 1963. I passed my driving test at the second attempt at the end of the year.

In 1964 I was asked to join a small group of hotel sales managers to be a founding member of the Hotel Sales Managers' Association.



On 1st March, 1965 I joined Centre Hotels as sales executive at the invitation of the Managing Director. My salary was £1,000 per annum.

Having joined a north London Jewish youth organisation called the Charter Society in the winter of 1966, I became chairman for the year 1967/68. The Society had around 150 members, ran several groups, such as music, cinema, discussion, drama and bridge, and organised outings and social functions.

In the spring of 1968 we decided that the time was right for us to look for our own house. We did not have enough money even for a mortgage so yet again I turned to the HJRC. They agreed to negotiate a loan of £325 to help us.

On 18th July 1968 my mother and I left Oakfield Court and moved into our own house at 183 The Vale, Golders Green. The purchase price was £7,500, where I lived until my marriage in July 1972 and my mother continued to live there.

ALL AGREEMENT MADE THIS 18th July 1968

BETWEEN HENRY GEORGE YOUNG of 183 The Vale, Golders Green in the London Borough of Barnet

(hereinafter called the Vendor) of the one part and

JOHN PAUL HADJO of 21 Oakfield Court, Hendon in the London Borough of Barnet

(hereinafter called the Purchaser) of the other part

WHEREBY IT IS AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

1. The Vendor will sell and the Purchaser will buy the freehold property described in the Schedule hereto.
2. The price shall be £7,500.0.0. of which £750.0.0. shall on or before the date hereof be paid as a deposit to Messrs. Russell Jones & Walker of 324 Gray's Inn Road, London W.C.1. as stakeholders.
3. The completion date shall be the 19th day of July 1968
4. The Vendor sells as Beneficial Owner
5. The property is sold subject to certain restrictive covenants stipulations and conditions contained or referred to in a Conveyance dated 1st April 1935 made between John Leung & Son Ltd. of the one part and Francis Lewis Wills of the other part

Purchase of 183 The Vale

In the meantime, my mother worked as a bookkeeper in Hatton Garden with an export/import company (1967-71) and then at a furrier's shop in Regent Street (1971-73).

I met Maureen at a party in Aylmer Road on 4th January 1969, her birthday. She was in London on holiday for only a few days, and had to return to Montreal where she was working for the Principal of Dawson College. We exchanged letters and the occasional telephone call over the next year, which became more intimate as time went on.

Reese Whitman, Suzanne Rose &
Katharine Lakey, et al.

request the pleasure
of your company

at 5400
at 13, Aylmer Road,
N.2.

Date January 4th 1969

Time 8.30 pm.

This is not our address. It is
the home of a friend of ours.
R.S.W.

***Party at which I met Maureen,
4th January 1969***

In October 1969 I toured Southern Ireland with a friend where we visited several tourist attractions, including Blarney Castle where I kissed the Blarney Stone.

**BLARNEY
castle**

in
THE VILLAGE OF BLARNEY
and the county of Cork
IRELAND

I HEREBY CERTIFY


that **JOHN P HASDU**
of **LONDON, ENGLAND**

visited this Castle and having kissed the BLARNEY STONE
is now sent forth with the
GIFT OF ELOQUENCE which this stone bestows

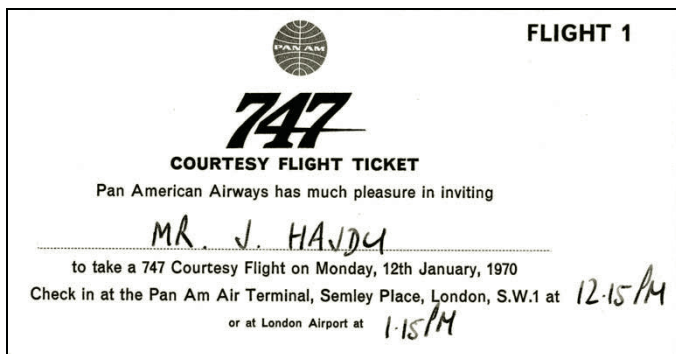
Dated this 1st day of OCTOBER 1969.

Signed *M. P. Hillyard*

Keeper of the Castle



Kissing the Blarney Stone, October 1969



1st 747 flight from London, 12th January 1970

It was in 1970 that I was asked to represent the Hotel Sales Managers' Association on the inaugural flight of the first PAN AM 747 flight from Heathrow.



*Train ticket to Westendorf,
31st December 1971*



*Westendorf, Austria,
25th December 1971*

Maureen returned to London in December 1970. We got engaged when I proposed to her on one knee in the snow in Westendorf, Austria, at Christmas 1971.



Car rally and table tennis cups, 1965 to 1971

While working at Centre Hotels I joined both the car rally and the table tennis teams and won several trophies.

HIMG

Since coming to this country from Hungary in 1957, John Hajdu, the new Chairman of the Hotel Industry Marketing Group, has spent most of his life working through the various departments of the hotel industry. He moved into sales in 1962. He was a founder member of the Hotel Sales Managers Association and later the Hotel Industry Marketing Group.



John Hajdu—new Chairman

***Chairman of the Hotel
Industry Marketing Group***



***President of the Hotel Industry
Marketing Group***

The Hotel Sales Managers' Association had now been recognised by the tourism industry, and in 1970 the Institute of Marketing incorporated the group and I became a founder member of the renamed Hotel Industry Marketing Group. In 1975 I was elected chairman and in 1976 president.

In March 1971 I joined Magnum Hotels (owned by a Hungarian, Steven Kennedy) as Sales Manager. My salary was

£5,000 per annum, which even then was very low, but I needed the experience of working for a four-star group of hotels. After one year I was approached by the Managing Director of Royal London Hotels and I joined them to run the sales office in April 1972.



On 23rd July 1972 Maureen and I were married at the West London Synagogue in Upper Berkeley Street, London, where we had become members. We lived at 32 Century Court in St. John's Wood, North West London.

We went on our honeymoon to Finland, 23rd July to 8th August, visiting Seinajoki, Aulanko and Helsinki.



On honeymoon in Finland

After our marriage in 1972 the house in The Vale was divided into two flats where my mother lived downstairs and let out the upstairs flat. (This continued until July 2000 when my mother's health deteriorated and she could not look after the tenants any more.)

In 1972 I decided to take the Institute of Advance Motorists' examination, which I passed on 29th July.



Member of the Institute of Advanced Motorists

In August 1973 I was appointed Sales Director of Royal London Hotels and Restaurants.

In October 1973 when I came to renew my passport I was advised by the Passport Office to renounce my Hungarian citizenship, because I would not be protected by H.M. Government on any visits to Hungary. I therefore took steps to do so, which was eventually confirmed by the Hungarian Authorities on 1st October 1974, after having paid £18!!

On 8th March 1974 we moved to our house at 37 Ringwood Avenue, in Fortis Green. The purchase price was £41,500.

My uncle Rezso (Rudi) visited London only once, for my wedding in 1972. He died in Budapest from an overdose of medication in 1975, aged 71.

Our son Nicolas was born on 12th April 1974 and our daughter Georgina on 4th February 1976.

In September 1976 I was interviewed in my capacity of President of the Hotel Industry Marketing Group, by the Today programme on Thames TV.

In 1977 I joined the Council of the London Tourist Board and later the Executive Board and in 1980 was elected Vice Chairman and shortly after that Acting Chairman. I was instrumental in restructuring the Board, selecting a new Director and inviting Sir Christopher Lever (former Lord Mayor of London) to take on the role of Chairman in November 1983.

TOURISM HELPS BRIDGE THE TRADE GAP

APPEARING on Thames Television's Today programme recently John Hajdu, in his capacity as president of the Hotel Industry Marketing Group, explained the importance of tourism as a foreign currency earner for Britain.

Mr Hajdu, who is sales director of EMI Hotels and Restaurants, was interviewed on the terrace of EMI's Royal Horseguards Hotel, in the heart of tourist London.

On incentives to tourists to come to Britain, he gave the example of a Scandinavian buying a suit for £75 in Copenhagen, being able to buy a complete package holiday in London (including air fare) and still being able to buy a suit — getting his suit free in London — for the same £75.

Mr Hajdu stressed the importance of going abroad to sell hotel accommodation. He has recently returned from Vienna, where Air-tour Austria and other operators have agreed to work with the EMI hotel group.

*Thames TV interview,
September 1976*

Board post

Mr John Hajdu, who lives in Ringwood Avenue, Muswell Hill, has been appointed the new vice-chairman of the London Tourist Board.

Mr Hajdu, 43, is the international sales manager of Thistle Hotels and is a founder member and former chairman of the Industry Marketing Group.

Vice Chair of the London Tourist Board

From 1978 to 1990 I was a member of the Marketing Intelligence Group of the British Tourist Authority, advising on tourism to Britain.

In 1979 I registered the name "Clarion" with a view to using it as a vehicle for a consultancy in the future. This turned out to be a very good move when I became a marketing consultant later.

In 1980 I was awarded the Sword of Honour by the Institute of Marketing for the best recruitment campaign of the year.





Sales Campaigns



Sales Campaigns

During the 70s and 80s I spent a considerable amount of time travelling overseas. One of the advantages of this was that I was able to take my family with me on some occasions, using my many contacts in the airline and hotel businesses. Places we visited together included: Australia, Thailand, Singapore, Finland and Scandinavia. Another advantage was that on almost every trip I allocated time to visit local museums, zoos and other places of interest (Table Mountain, Cape Town and Kruger National Park in South Africa, Taj Mahal in India, the Buddhist temples of Bangkok, temples in Tokyo and Mount Fuji, the Barrier Reef in Australia, and many more).



Luggage labels from around the world

In 1982 I was privileged to be invited to attend the official opening of the Barbican Arts Centre by H.M. the Queen.

In 1987 I was awarded the Come to Britain Campaign Medal for services to the incoming tourism industry.



***Come to Britain Campaign
Medal***

In 1989 I was elected Chairman of the Associate Members of the British Incoming Tour Operators' Association.

I was made redundant by Mount Charlotte Thistle Hotels on 28th April 1990.

In May 1990 I started working on my own as a sales and marketing consultant [as Clarion Consultants, see Appendix II], advising independent hotels and restaurants until the end of 2014.

In 1990 I was elected Chairman of the Travel Workshop Club and held this position for 8 years. The membership consisted of senior sales and marketing executives of the hotel industry and tourism organisations in Britain. All members had to have taken part in overseas sales trips and workshops organised by the British Tourist Authority. I participated in the very first such workshop in 1966 in Stockholm and in 44 subsequent trips [see separate folder, marked: overseas trips].

In 1990/91 I was Chairman of the Friends (parents) of City of London School, where our son Nick went to school. During my tenure I organised an international food festival amongst other projects.

In 1990 I formed the Friends of Coldfall Wood (a large, ancient wood at the bottom of our street, which until the early 1900s covered the entire area where our street and our house are located) environmental group, which undertook regular work, including litter picking, mending and painting fences, clearing paths, fund raising for benches, clearing the streams, etc. I was the coordinator until 1994.

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Coldfall Woods blooming

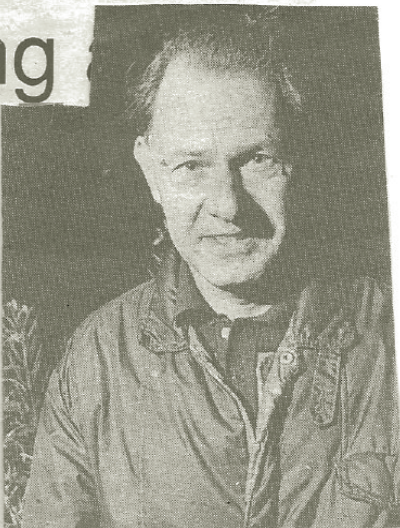
WILD flowers have returned to the heart of an ancient beauty spot despite years of pollution, litter dumping and council neglect.

Forty kinds of flower are now flourishing in Coldfall Woods, East Finchley, where few grew a year ago, according to John Hajdu (pictured) of the Friends of Coldfall Woods.

The Friends spent a weekend last December cutting down hornbeam trees to allow the sun and rain to feed the flowers that were lying dormant there.

"It has regenerated the whole area," said Mr Hajdu. "It's very exciting to bring it back to what it was like before the hornbeam."

The Friends were formed 18 months ago to look after the ancient forest, a direct descendant of the forests which covered most of Britain 6,000 years ago.



Co-ordinator of Coldfall Woods, 1990-1994

In June 1992 I became a magistrate and sat at the Highgate (Haringey Bench) Court House for the first time in August of that year. Cases were heard either at the Highgate or at the Tottenham Court House.

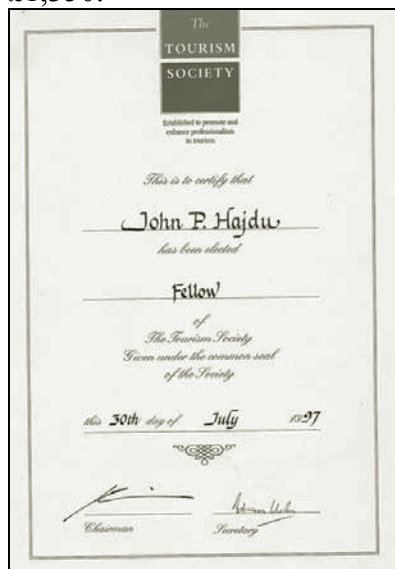
I joined the Licensing Committee in 1994.

My first sitting on the Youth bench was in January 1996.

My first Crown Court (Wood Green) sitting was on 3rd March 1995.

I was appointed a Chairman on the Bench on 16th March 1998.

In 1996, after several years of correspondence with the Hungarian government, who were offering restitution for persecution of Jews during the war, I received the princely sum of £1,350.



In 1997 I was elected a Fellow of the Tourism Society, having been a member since 1993.

My aunt Iby, who still lived in Budapest, visited us almost every year and stayed with my mother, where I met her many times. Her last visit to London was in June 2000. She died in Budapest in 2001, aged 94. She had not only saved my life and looked after me in the Ghetto, but after I escaped she collected from our flat small precious items, and most of the documents and photos which she later gave me, many of which I have used in this book.

In May 2001, having served on the committee for three years, I was elected Chairman of the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association, the largest residents' association in Haringey, with about 700 members. [For further information on activities undertaken between 2001 and 2014, see Appendix III.]

In 2002 I was elected Chairman of the Licensing Committee of the Haringey Bench and in January 2005 I was elected Chairman of the Licensing Appeals Committee.

My mother moved into an old people's home in December 2002 and died on 21st April, 2006, aged 97. [For details of her life see her CV.]

In July 2006 I was elected President of Northern Heights PROBUS, a luncheon club for retired professional business men and women in North London. During my term of office I had to find speakers for the monthly lunches and arrange outings.



Chairman John is named president

THE CHAIRMAN of Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association has been appointed president of a club for retired people.

John Hajdu has taken over the role at Northern Heights Probus Club, which covers Highgate, Muswell Hill, Hampstead, Finchley, East Finchley and Hendon.

President of Probus, July 2006

AGM - Ward Panel

The Fortis Green Ward Panel had its annual General Meeting and I am pleased to inform you that John Hajdu has been selected again to perform the role of chair. John is a very supportive member of the panel and a good friend to the Safer Neighbourhood Team. He is a good guy to have onboard not just because of his links with a number of organisations and influential bodies but also because he is a "nice bloke." I have been very grateful for his hard work and persistence over the last 18 months and very pleased that he has decided to take on the job again.

Chair of Fortis Green Ward Panel, 2008

In September 2006 I was elected Chairman of the Metropolitan Police Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panel for Fortis Green, one of the wards in Haringey. Each ward had a sergeant, 2 constables and 2 or 3 community support officers. The 14-strong panel consisted of local residents, among others representatives of schools, religious bodies and pubs. The panel met every two months to discuss local police activities to decide what priorities the police should concentrate on for the following two months. Our aim was to ensure that the police communicated with local residents, and engaged and consulted with them on local issues.



Visit to Budapest, 2006

In October 2006 I returned to Budapest with my son Nick for the 50th Anniversary of the 1956 revolution, and recorded this visit by collecting newspaper reports in English and Hungarian of both the 1956 events and the 2006 celebrations. [Photos of the visit are on my computer, under “Documents”, “My Pictures”.]

On reaching the age of 70 in April 2007 I had to retire from the Bench, after 15 years' service at the Highgate and Tottenham Court Houses.



Family at Vienna Opera House

We (the four of us) celebrated my 70th birthday in Vienna, where we met my cousin Juti and her family, as well as visiting places of interest, including museums and many famous coffee houses, and going to the opera (Wagner's "The Flying Dutchman").

In 2005 I joined the Haringey Independent Advisory Group in my capacity as a Ward Chairman representing the residents in the west of the Borough. The group of 20 (representing wide-ranging communities) met regularly with the Borough Commander and other senior officers to discuss borough-wide issues concerning the police. In June 2007 the Borough Commander decided that this group should have an independent chairman, not a police officer as had been the custom until then, and I was elected. I remained chairman for four years.

My duties included helping to train new police recruits, observing police operations, visits to the Central Communication Command in Bow, to Scotland Yard (several times) and to the Empress State Building Police HQ, to attend a Counter Terrorism meeting representing Haringey.



***Presentation by the Haringey Borough
Commander.***



***Safer Communities
Award, 2010***



Holiday in Switzerland, 2009

In 2010 I was awarded the “Most outstanding volunteer within the criminal justice system” certificate by the Metropolitan Police in Haringey.

In May 2010, after years of research I published a booklet entitled: Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association, a history of its campaigns and landmark achievements. The booklet covers the activities of the Association since its inception in 1948.



On 12th November 2011 our son Nicolas married Dr Leanne Rivers.



My son's wedding - Nicolas and Leanne

In 2011, after seven years' work, I completed my family history chart showing my family on my paternal grandfather's side, incorporating 83 names, 62 with photos. I also completed the chart

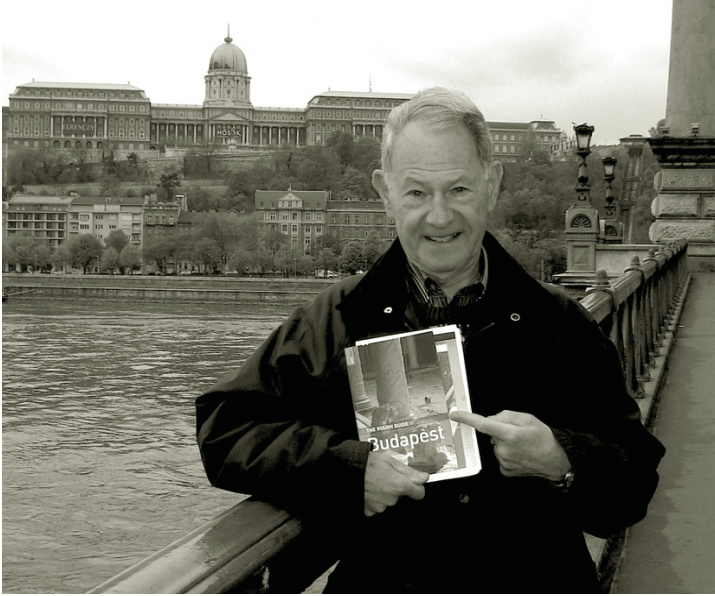
on my paternal grandmother's side, showing 36 names and photos, and Maureen's father's side with 40 photos and names [see under Family Historian and also paper charts].

On 1st November 2012 our first grandchild (Nick and Leanne's son) Robin was born, and his brother, Toby, arrived on 29th September 2014.

In 2012 I returned to Budapest with my daughter Georgina to explain my background and history. [Photos are on my computer, under "Documents", "My Pictures".] I also met a group of relatives I had not known about before, as a result of the seven years of research into my family history [see under Family History], which resulted in discovering 80 new relatives on my maternal grandmother's side: 105 names, 96 with photos!!



*Enjoying a cake at Europa
Cafe Budapest*



On the Chain Bridge, Budapest

In the swim

By Daphne Chamberlain

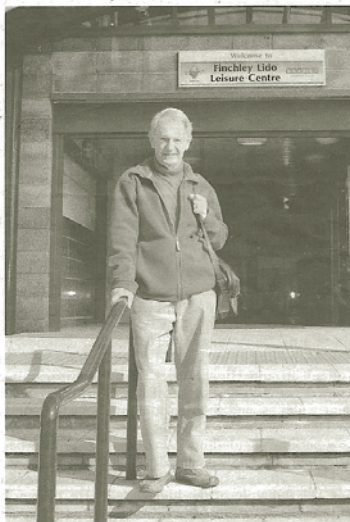
What makes an enjoyable visit to a swimming-pool? Cleanliness, maintenance and staff are most people's priorities. As the Finchley Lido users' co-ordinator, John Hajdu does have to report broken toilets, hairdryers and showers, malfunctioning lockers and cleaning issues, but says that work is carried out very quickly to rectify the problems.

Intriguingly, though, the Over 55s Users Group which John co-ordinates developed for a different reason. He noticed that nobody seemed to talk to anyone else. Most of the other regular swimmers were Seniors too, and he thought it might be nice to get to know each other. Eventually his campaign to greet and chat got going. John put together an email list, and people began to exchange news, check up on those who missed a few sessions, and welcome newcomers. Then they invited the Lido managers to meetings to discuss different issues.

Making waves

Their unofficial club became an official over 55s Users Group when, in 2007, Greenwich Leisure, who manage the pool, planned to raise the annual concessionary rate of £60 to over £200. John organised a petition and a letter, which resulted in Over-55s' season ticket holders being able to renew annually at the same price (plus a small inflationary increase), for as long as they continued to swim at the Lido.

Now the group meets every three or four months, and John also has one-to-one access to the pool managers. He told us that broken and sagging lane dividers were replaced at the users' request, and the group point out swimmers who are using the wrong speed lanes to the staff, who immediately take action. Every term John is shown the schedule for school visits, which he circulates among the members.



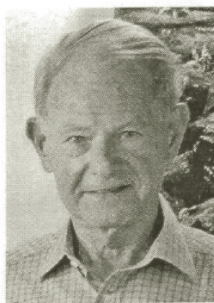
John Hajdu outside, Finchley Lido Photo by Caron Westbrook

He says, "We now have a happy relationship with management and staff, who are grateful for our feedback and co-operation".

May 2012

Monthly meetings organiser

The new organiser of monthly meetings is John Hajdu, who joined U3A in 2007 and the committee in 2012. He says: 'The members' meetings are an important part of what North London U3A is about. As well as providing an opportunity to hear interesting speakers on almost every subject imaginable, they are a fantastic forum for members to chat and get to know each other. I am therefore delighted, if a little daunted, to have been asked to take on this job, and I shall do my best to live up to the standards of those who have done it so admirably in the past.'



Elected Vice Chairman, University of the Third Age, North London, in 2013.

On 26th May 2013
our daughter Georgina
married Robert Benton.



***My daughter's wedding – Georgina and
Robert***



My daughter's wedding – Georgina and her dad

Maureen and I hope to enjoy our expanding family for many years to come, and to continue our annual trips to Switzerland, visits to National Trust properties (to date over 150), our countryside walks and other sporting activities, as well as involvement in many voluntary, community and cultural organisations.



In London, June 2013

Also available in separate folders:

1) Livia Frank's CV.
2) Details of overseas trips undertaken (both on business and leisure). Between 1965 and 1996 I undertook 160 business trips. Between 1959 and 2014 we travelled 145 times on leisure trips, in this country and overseas. We also visited 138 National Trust properties between 1971 and 2014.

3) Information and articles on the persecution of Hungarian Jews as follows:

- The Jews in Hungary
- Hungarian Jews under Admiral Horthy
- The Arrow Cross Party
- Hungarian Jews in the 1940s, labour camps, Ghetto and deportation

- The Holocaust/Mauthausen (also on the bookshelf)
- Deportation of Hungarian Jews, 1944 and the Allied reaction

- Raoul Wallenberg, 1944
- Background information on the concentration camps Kophaza, Mauthausen and Gunskirchen, by a fellow inmate.

4) Family documents and old photos

5) Family photo albums

APPENDIX I:

BUSINESS C.V.

(see also business scrap book)

1956 Joined Grosvenor House Hotel, London, first as a wine waiter and later as a porter, waiter and chef.

1957 – 59 Hotel and Catering Course at Middlesex University (then Hendon Technical College). During summer vacations worked as a waiter in Brighton and Eastbourne hotels.

1959 – 60 Joined Grand Metropolitan Hotels as a Receptionist at the Clifton Ford Hotel. Six months later transferred to the Mandeville Hotel as a Control Office clerk.

1960 – 62 Receptionist and later Reception Manager at Stratford Court Hotel.

1962 – 65 Transferred to the Sales Department of Grand Metropolitan Hotels as Sales Assistant. After one year, promoted to Assistant Sales Manager.

1965 – 71 At the invitation of the Managing Director of the newly formed Centre Hotels, joined as Sales Manager, setting up and running a sales office as the Group expanded over the years.

1971 – 72 Invited to join Magnum hotels (consisting of three luxury hotels) on a one-year contract to set up and run the sales office.

1972 – 73 Invited by the Managing Director to join Royal London Hotels/Golden Egg Group of Companies to run the Sales Office.

1973 – 78 Appointed Sales Director and later invited to join the Board of Directors, Royal London Hotels. Managed the office through expansion, reporting directly to the Managing Director for all Sales and Marketing activities.

1978 – 80 EMI acquired Royal London Hotels. As a result of the reorganisation, became responsible for total overseas sales and U.K. travel trade.

1980 – 89 Thistle Hotels (a division of Scottish & Newcastle Breweries) acquired EMI Hotels. Appointed Director of International Sales, set up international sales office responsible for: all business originating from overseas; the tourist business from within the U.K. to the Group's 35 hotels; and all rate negotiations. Established and ran overseas offices in New York and Frankfurt, managing all overseas representatives.

1989 In November Mount Charlotte Hotels took over Thistle Hotels.

1990 On 28th April made redundant. In May set up Sales and Marketing Consultancy, working with hotels, restaurants and travel agents both in this country and overseas.

APPENDIX II:

SALES AND MARKETING JOBS UNDERTAKEN AS CLARION CONSULTANTS

6.90-1.91	Starcrown Hotels (Blakemore Hotel)
6-7.90	London Handling (Incoming Tour Operator)
11.90-1.91	Tavistock Tours (Incoming Tour Operator)
3.91-1.96	London London Hotel
6.91-7.97	Sty Al Hoteliers (Royal Norfolk, Tria, Byron)
2-10.92	Hinckley Island Hotel, Hinckley
2.92-4.94	Shuttleworth Restaurants (Aldwych and Charing Cross Road)
7-11.92	Stagecoach Hotels (Bournemouth, Halland, Box)
8-9.92	Pampas Consultancy (Sales and Marketing)
4.92-8.00	LTH Hotels (London Tourist, Plaza Continental, Hillgate) Later: Comfort Inn Bayswater, Comfort Inn Notting Hill, Quality Hotel Hampstead, Quality Hotel Paddington
12.92-5.93	Marriot Hotel Swiss Cottage
7.93-9.95	Swiss Cottage Hotel
7.93-12.94	Victoria Hotel Amsterdam, Mandarin Hotel Eindhoven

4-6.94	Heronston Hotel, Bridgend
7.94-12.14	Parkers Restaurants (Villa Stefano and Parkers)
4-5.95	Discovery Tours (Incoming Tour Operator)
9-10.95	St Giles Hotel
11.95-5/96	Finlandia Travel (Hungarian sales trip)
3.96-7.97	Direct Link (Hungarian research)
6.97-6.99	Hotel Promotions Ltd/Fantoni – Hotel Reservations Agency)
5-7.97	Grim's Dyke Hotel
11-12.98	Clerkenwell Conference Centre
6.00-4.01	Ashley Hotels (Quality Hotel St. Albans, Quality Hotel Andover)
9.01-5.02	LTH Hotels
5-9.02	Caesar Hotel
5-8.02	Warwick Hotel
10.03-6/08	Bankside Restaurant
11-12.06	Archduke Restaurant
6-7.08	Ravello Restaurant

APPENDIX III:

ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN AS CHAIRMAN OF MUSWELL HILL AND FORTIS GREEN ASSOCIATION

The Association was formed in 1948. It is a non-sectarian, non-political group, looking after the interests of local residents in three wards in the west of Haringey.

The brief encompasses environment, planning, transport and green sites, among other issues. The aims are a cleaner, greener and safer environment to live in.

The Association publishes a Newsletter every 2 months, it has a website and a Notice Board (see page 116) in the shopping centre.

During my chairmanship of 15 years, we increased our membership to about 700 members: it is one of the largest residents' associations in London. Some of our major achievements since I became chairman, include:

In 2000 our first competition called The Muswell Hill Picture Show was launched. Entries of paintings, photographs and videos were entered and displayed.

In 2001 a new look Newsletter was introduced. In the same year we initiated the refurbishment of the abandoned pocket park opposite the John Baird pub.

In 2002 the Association launched its first website, which was then redesigned and re-launched in 2013.

In 2003 I organised the largest and most successful meeting of the Association, attended by more than 200 people. The famous organist, Jennifer Bate gave the audience a “Guide to the king of instruments” and also played the organ.

That same year the Association held its first Front Garden Competition.

In 2004 we held our second front garden competition. We had 30 entries. Also in 2004 I introduced a summer guided walk in our area.



In 2005 I discovered a long abandoned path along Muswell Hill at Grove Lodge, which we restored. (It was originally created in 1945.) For this initiative we were awarded a certificate by the Council for submitting a winning project to the Making the Difference programme.

In the same year I came up with the idea of putting up plaques to commemorate famous residents of Haringey. Following several meetings the scheme was approved by the Council and subsequently, after many months of research and planning, with the help of the Hornsey Historical Society, 15 plaques have been put up in various parts of the Borough. The first of these was unveiled in October 2007 at the top of Hillfield Park, Muswell Hill. Though there are a further 15 names on the list to be considered, the Council stopped funding in 2011 and so we have not been able to continue the project.

In March 2006 we received a trophy at the Better Haringey Recyclers of the Year meeting, to acknowledge our efforts in encouraging our members to recycle in our area.

In September we put up our Notice Board in the centre of Muswell Hill, the first Community Board in Haringey to be administered by a residents' association.

In 2007 we received the Better Haringey Best Community Initiative Award.



2007-2009: The saving and restoration of Langton Clock. Since 1899 this handsome and decorative clock has been part of the Muswell Hill Broadway street furniture, put up by E. W. Langton, the jeweller. However the clock stopped working in the early 1980s. I decided to make the restoration the 60th anniversary project of the Association. Having gained the support of the Council and having found a local clock maker, the clock was eventually taken down, repaired and put back up in full working order on 1st May 2009. [See plaque on the wall, under the clock.]

In 2008, after a three-year fight, 2 new CCTV cameras were installed one at each end of the Broadway. In the same year, we identified two more pocket parks opposite each other at the top of Muswell Hill in need of restoration. This was done by the Council in the next few months.

In 2009 we took over 2 abandoned roadside flowerbeds in Colney Hatch Lane at the entrance to Muswell Hill. These beds are now full of plants and flowers.

In 2010, after nine years of research, I published the book of the history of the Association.

In 2012 we took over from the Council the planting and maintaining of the flower boxes at the main roundabout

In 2013 the website and the Newsletter were redesigned.

For further information, see the book about the history of the Association, and the press cuttings folder.