



Iby's Story, Chapter 2

One evening my mother had a phone call from a friend of hers asking her whether they had been yet to fetch me and mother said, "Fetch Iby? Why should they fetch Iby?" Well evidently they had been to fetch her daughters, they were evidently rounding up young Jewish girls to be, there's really no easy way round it, to be prostitutes for the German soldiers on the Eastern Front. None of those survived so it is one of the very well kept secrets which can't be proved or disproved because nobody survived those. So we were at that moment, that time, visited by one of my mother's cousins, who refused to wear a yellow star and there were quite a lot of people who refused to do so, so she – I dressed up with a head scarf like a peasant girl with a little case and my cousin and I took the tram out to the village where my grandparents lived and I was hidden by my grandparents for a few days until my mother could make arrangements for me to get away to safety.

After about three days my cousin came for me and we cycled to a village about an hour away which was the village from where our cooks and maids always came, so we had a connection with them and I went to stay with a family there, the wife who had been one of our cooks (? Indistinct) and I was introduced being the, her niece that was the reason given for my being there and after about a week arrangements had been made that her husband was going to take me across the border, so we cycled part of the way and we then walked, it was February 1942, and everything was frozen and cold, and then crawled across no-man's-land into Hungary, to the nearest village, the station and then took the train from there to Budapest and John took me to my aunt, my father's sister in Budapest. Well my aunt naturally didn't know I was coming and was not very pleased about seeing me at all, because by this time although there was no active persecution of Jewish people in Hungary, harbouring illegal immigrants was a punishable offence and she personally didn't want to expose herself to that. She was all for sending me back but I mean John just said he had no arrangements to take me back. As far as he was concerned, he had delivered me, and he turned round and he went.

Auntie Bella just (?) said that she couldn't have me there and she just didn't know what to do and John had gone and was in an almighty flap about it and

Martin said, 'Well she can come and stay with me. I've had girls staying overnight before now and nobody is going to worry about that'. So I went and stayed with Martin. I never quite found out what he actually did for a living. He had a big car with which he drove around but I never quite found out what he was doing. I found out later that he was involved in the underground movement because when he was, advised that he was going to be called up for labour service, which was the equivalent of army service, he said that he would have to make some arrangement for me to be, go somewhere else to live because if he went into labour service his flat would be locked up. There was no way in which I could stay living there on my own because nobody had to know that I was actually there. So we met up in a restaurant with Doctor Marki and his wife and after some talk and investigation Doctor Marki said yes, he was going to take me on, those were his words and I went to live with them and officially I was a companion to his wife, who was deaf and dumb but she was fluent in sign language in English, so we communicated with, I learned signing and we communicated actually in English sign language which nobody else could understand and while I was there I was used, one of the things, one of my tasks was to go to certain hotels for a tea dance and people used to come up to dance with me and then I would report to Doctor Marki who I had danced with and that was how we came up against somebody who worked at the Italian Embassy and I was told to encourage that person because that person could get visas for the people that we were helping to escape like pilots who had been shot down over Germany or Austria and this was really an escape route of getting them out of, through Yugoslavia and Greece where they were picked up again by the British or American forces.

About a week after this particular occasion I was just going down the stairs when two men came along and they said did I know where Doctor Marki lives and I said, "Yes, on the first floor". Can I take them there? They said well it's just on the first floor, it's alright, or rather, can you show us? Not thinking anything about it, just thinking perhaps they were stupid, I went with them, and rang the bell, and the maid opened the door and said, "Oh Miss Iby, did you forget your key?" and I said, "No". The two men pushed me in and said no, they wanted to see Doctor Marki and they were from the, probably the equivalent of the secret police and they took Doctor Marki and me to the police station and we weren't the only ones. We subsequently found out that over four hundred people actually got arrested at the same time, who were involved in this particular escape movement and because some very high ups were involved eventually it was decided that they were not going to be prosecuted. In the meantime I had spent a very uncomfortable fortnight at the

police, being investigated and three months in the prison where every week you are taken to the magistrate to be interrogated and it was June 1942 that they told me they weren't going to prosecute me and as I went out of the gates of the prison, I was arrested for illegal entry as an illegal immigrant.