

Magdolna Palmai During Ruin Clearing At The Vazsony Villa



Budapest, 30th September 1944. In the 9th week of debris carrying - this is written on the back of the picture. Otherwise the picture was taken for my birthday, I was born then, on 30th September. I was 23 years old here. We were clearing the ruins at the Vazsony Villa when someone took our picture. I am in the light dress, the other one is Klari. Unfortunately I don't remember her last name. From the summer of 1944 until the fall we cleared away the ruins, for which we got a little salary. We couldn't buy many things from our salary, but we could buy bread and a couple of small things. At that time they had imposed a curfew on Jews, but we could walk in the town this way. And of course any money came in handy, because we had no income. At that time we lived like this. The center for the clearing away of ruins was on Andrássy Street 105; before the building was bombed nuns had lived there. In the summer of 1944 I found out from an Arrow Cross boy, with whom we cleared the ruins away at the Vazsonyi Villa, what had been going on at Szent István Avenue 2, an infamous Arrow Cross house in 1944, where they took those whom they caught in the street. It was such a world at that time, we worked together with this Arrow Cross boy. He was a young man, he didn't have any trade yet, so he got a job with the bricklayers. He said that in the house on Szent István Avenue the wall was bloody, then he brought a golden cigarette case. I asked him how he could smoke from that. He said 'with difficulty.' At night the Arrow Cross men made raids. Once we were sleeping in one of the ruined houses with Klari, with whom we worked together on the clearing away of the ruins, and with whom we were together later in forced labor. We couldn't turn the light on, we looked for pieces of parquet in which there weren't any nails, to put under our head as a pillow. We lay in one corner, so that in case there was a proof shot, and it lit up the place, they wouldn't see that we were sleeping there. We could stay there for a couple of nights, then the foreman told us that they couldn't hide us any longer, the ruin clearing was stopped, the front was approaching, so we had to leave. This happened after September 1944, but before 15th October.