

Elza Fulop In The Jewish Hospital



This is a picture of me amidst some patients at the Jewish Public Hospital 'David Sebestyen & Wife', where I worked as a nurse from 1940.

The hospital had been founded by my grandfather's brother, who was a very wealthy man. The doctors were all Jewish, but the supporting staff - the cook, the cleaning ladies - was Christian. So were some of the paramedics too. Jewish doctors were not allowed to work in State clinics, so they came to our hospital. Similarly, Jewish medical students came here for their internships, as the other hospitals turned them down. As far as the patients were concerned, the hospital made no discrimination - Christians were admitted too.

The manager was my uncle's niece's husband, which made me the cousin of the manager's wife. But I kept this a secret, because I wanted to succeed thanks to my skills, not to my family ties. I had my pride. Many years later, when I finally did tell the manager this secret, he looked surprised as to why I hadn't turned this to my advantage. Well, I didn't have to. I worked very hard to meet the job requirements, I studied a lot, and I succeeded. I was regarded as one of the best employees.

What made me choose this career was my feeling attached to the sick people. The results were obvious. The sick would become very attached to me. A psychological bond would develop between us and, in most cases, I also did psychotherapy. This is how I did my job. I felt very close to it, and I didn't do it out of obligation, but willingly. I saw my occupation as a pleasure, not a

burden. We didn't work eight hours per day, but twelve. We had to work twelve hours out of 24 and we only had half a day off every week. But I didn't find it too difficult, because the hospital had become my second home.

I worked there from 1940 until 1944.