

## Dr. Joseph Freund, gynecological surgeon, head of the *Freund Szanatorium Timisoara*

### By Peter Freund

Dr. Joseph Freund was born on February 13, 1901 in Timișoara as the oldest son of wheat-dealer Armin Freund and his wife Etelka (née Auslander, originary of Losonc). A second son Sanyi was born to them in 1905. Etelka died in 1907, the victim of gynecological malpractice. Armin remarried to Jozsa Funk of Bratislava, and in 1909 they had a son, Imre.

Joseph graduated the then Hungarian high school which at the end of WWI became the Romanian Liceul Loga. The end of WWI marked the bankruptcy of Armin, who in wartime had invested all his savings in Austrian Imperial Bonds. In spite of strong parental pressure to start earning money, Joseph left Timișoara to study medicine and become a good gynecologist, and thereby, so to speak, avenge his mother's death. As was the custom in those days, he moved each semester to another university. He started out in Cluj, continuing from there to Prague, Würzburg, Berlin and Leipzig, where he took the course of Dr. Walter Stoeckel, the world's leading gynecologist. He obtained his MD specializing in gynecological surgery in Leipzig under the supervision of Dr. Georg Linzenmeier in 1925. From Germany he was sending monthly money to his father. His first employment was a gynecological surgeon at the municipal hospital of the German city of Gotha.



*Dr Joseph Freund and his wife Rozsi after WWII, Timisoara*

In 1933, with Hitler's rise to power, he fled Germany and returned to Timișoara, where he married Rozsi Freund of Lugoj. In 1936 a son, Peter was born to them.

In 1935 the *Sanatoriul Central*, also known as the *Freund Szanatorium* at the corner of Bulevardul Revolutiei din 1989 and Str. Loga was built. In the beginning this hospital had about twenty beds, to which ten more were added later. Its staff was composed of five nurses, a chef, and some six kitchen and cleaning personnel. Besides Dr. Joseph Freund, a number of other Timisoara physicians were affiliated with this *sanatoriu*. Among these, Dr. Brück, the ENT (ORL in Romanian) specialist operated there a lot. Dr. Joseph Freund himself branched out to general surgery. The

sanatoriu was “CNR<sup>1</sup>-izat” during the war, but functioned all the same as a hospital available to Jewish patients. Jews could not be treated by Christian doctors and they could not be hospitalized in Romanian medical establishments.

It was returned to the Freunds at war’s end, only to be expropriated by the communists in 1948. Soon after that, Dr. Freund was sent to Lovrin near the Hungarian and Serbian borders to direct a sanatoriu expropriated from a Swabian physician there. He managed to return to Timișoara a couple of years later as a physician with the CFR<sup>2</sup> and opened a private practice.

In 1959 the Freund family managed to emigrate to Vienna, where Peter obtained his Ph.D. at the University of Vienna. There existed a treaty between Austria and Germany according to which MD degrees obtained at German universities were recognized in Austria, but only if the person holding such a degree was either a German or an Austrian citizen. Joseph, being stateless, could not practice in Vienna, and at the suggestion of an Austrian colleague, went to Germany, where his Leipzig MD was automatically recognized. He ended up in the city of Hildesheim near Hannover in Lower Saxony, where he started an OB/GYN section at the municipal hospital. In the mid-sixties he retired from the hospital and opened a private practice, which he pursued till his retirement in the mid-seventies. Joseph and Rozsi then moved to the city of Konstanz at the source of the river Rhine. In 1982 Dr. Joseph Freund died there of kidney failure.

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<sup>1</sup> Centrul Național de Românilizare. Jews were not allowed to own property.

<sup>2</sup> Romanian Railway