

CHAPTER 11
START WITH MEDICINE

One day, a so-called Heimkehrer Transport, in English home-comers transport, was organized for Austrians. Many people went to register and I went too. They were not too strict and did not ask for proof that one was really an Austrian citizen, since many people had lost their papers. So, I was accepted and put on the list. I had to say again "good bye" to all my loved ones, and also to my girl friend, Sidy Berler and her family.

And so I went with the Austrian home-comers to Vienna. Many old friends and some of the professors from the University were also on the train. It was a long ride, taking two or three days. To my astonishment, my stepfather had given me an amount of money for the trip, which should cover my expenses for the whole year. And it was really enough. I found very soon a furnished room, which I shared with a friend. It was in Ser-

vitengasse 13 in the 9th district. I registered immediately in the medical school and was accepted. Students did not have to pay any tuition fees in those days. I also filled out a document, in which I declared my option for the Republic of Austria as my home-land. This was only a declaration from my side and did not make me a citizen. It took about 5 years, until I was finally accepted as a citizen and I received an Austrian Heimatschein, the document attesting to it.

I started seriously with my studies of medicine and went to all lectures regularly. The subjects were biology, physics, chemistry, anatomy, histology, and physiology. Final examinations in these subjects could only be taken after $2\frac{1}{2}$ years. I was all day from morning till late in the afternoon busy, and we had to run from one institute to another one, which were quite far apart. Most time we spent in the anatomical institute, which was headed by the famous professor Tandler, who had many assistants and instructors. We first got human bones, which we had to study on hand of books, which described every detail of them. Most complicated were the bones of the skull and face. Next came dissections of cadavers. We learned soon to overcome the distaste of dissecting cadavers. It often happened that I found myself alone in a room, where there were 6 to 8 cadavers lying on tables. Our work was always supervised by the instructors, who marked our progress in their books.

The lecture hall of professor Tandler was always filled to capacity, since he was an excellent and famous teacher. Chemical experiments in the chemical institute played also an important part of our work, and we had to study in the evenings and on weekends at home to prepare ourselves for the next day. At

the end of each semester we had to take examinations, which were called colloquia, usually held by the assistants of the various professors. In general, it was a strict program, and we were kept busy all the time.

The study plan consisted of three parts, called rigorosa. After passing the examinations of the first six subjects, one received a certificate of the first rigorosum. For the next 12 subjects, one had to study another $2\frac{1}{2}$ years, before one was allowed to take the examinations. The second rigorosum consisted of the following 6 subjects: Pathologic anatomy, experimental pathology, pharmacology, internal medicine, pediatrics, psychiatry, and for the third rigorosum the subjects were: Surgery, hygiene, legal medicine, gynecology and obstetrics, dermatology, and ophthalmology.

Attending lectures in all these subjects was obligatory, although it seldom happened that a professor read a list of students to check whether they were present or not. In general the students had so-called academic freedom, the choice to go to different lectures about the same subjects, for instance, if one wanted he could go to the lecture about surgery either to the lecture of professor Eiselsberg or professor Hochenegg, which were held at the same time between 10 and 12 o'clock. Students could also register for courses, which were not obligatory, like embryology, hematology, orthopedic surgery, tuberculosis, etc. and that is what I did. To some I went even together with my father-in-law.

After passing all examinations, one graduated in a ceremonial graduation and received a diploma, which entitled one to open right away an office and treat patients. Some

people did that, but most graduates preferred to register in a hospital to get acquainted with the treatment of patients in hospitals. I myself did that for 5 years, practicing in different clinics, at the same time working in an institute for pathology under professor Carl Sternberg, observing autopsies of patients, who had died in the hospital, examining parts of the organs under the microscope, performing autopsies myself, doing work in bacteriology etc.

I graduated on March 13th, 1925. I had postponed the last examination for half a year, because I had not yet received my citizenship paper. It was quite difficult to get it, and it required the intervention of many prominent people, till I got it. Had I not postponed my last examination, I would have had to graduate as a foreign student and would have had to return to Rumania and practice medicine there.

I am leaving here the description of my activities as a medical student, to describe also my social life, the other side of the coin. There was enough time for enjoyment, for recreation, for theatres, concerts, movies, excursions, etc. And there was also dancing. There was a girl, Fritzi Feller, whom I knew for years from Czernowitz, who lived with her family during the entire war in Vienna. Her brother, Branco Feller, was a colleague of mine in the gymnasium. I was seeing her from time to time, usually on weekends, and visited her also in her home. She played nicely the piano, was taking lessons, and I remember especially that she played the Wanderer Phantasy by Schubert quite well. I went often dancing with her and I enjoyed it. I never was in love with her. She was not especially pretty and was very nearsighted. It

was a simple, minor affair, but not more. We sometimes also went to balls, always with her mother as a chaperon. That was the rule in those days. Through her I became acquainted with other young girls and, among others, with a girl whose name was Anny Pariser. She was an especially good dancer and was a friend of Fritz Feller. Occasionally we visited Anny Pariser in her home.