

Le Fagnou was a castle...



MICHEL FRIED

Le Fagnou was a castle in the small village of Niveze, near Spa in Belgium. It was owned by Andre Peltzer, who made it available, during the war as a holiday camp for children of employees of the family. His brother, Jean, owned a factory in Brussels, managed by Michel's father. In 1942, 6-year-old Michel commenced a "holiday" which would last for 2 1/2 years!

In December 1944, Le Fagnou became a field hospital for American soldiers and the Mulenaers family, employees at the castle, took Michel to their village, Surdent. Here he remained until August 1945, when he was reunited with his parents, Eugene and Aurelia, after they were liberated.

During that time, he believed they were trapped in Hungary. He wrote to them and his letters, posted by the headmistress of Le Fagnou, were answered by an employee of the Peltzers. Not until after the war, would he learn of his parents' ordeal, which included surviving concentration camps. And much later, he came to understand the great courage and generosity of his benefactors. Not only did they save his life, Jean Peltzer undertook to care for and educate Michel, should his parents not return. In addition, they promised to set aside Eugene's monthly salary to give Michel when he turned 21. For Michel, it is a privilege to honour the name of the Peltzer family.

Courage to care