

Sandor Bacher



This photo shows my brother. It was taken in Gyergyoszentmiklós. My brother didn't want to sit still, he was crying, so they put a big lump sugar in his mouth to keep him silent. He didn't want to sit, and they wanted to silence him with a lump sugar. This is the story of the photo. Of course my parents told me this later.

There was a difference of age of 6 years between my brother and me. My brother was born in 1905. He was called Sandor Bacher. He lived in Maramarossziget at grandfather's until he finished four grades of gymnasium. But he lived there under very strict rules, he had to pray a lot. At dawn my grandfather woke him up to teach him how to pray in the morning and in the night. The Jewish religion is an extremely rigorous, so difficult religion. And my brother said that 'I would rather go to chop wood, but I won't go back to Maramarossziget.' And he got then here [to Marosvasarhely] in the fifth grade, and he took his final examination here. I still have the photo on his fiftieth class reunion. In Maramarossziget he didn't have to have payes, there wasn't such a demand, my mother stipulated that. He attended the catholic gymnasium there. Back then life was very different there. The schoolmaster let the Jewish children to bring into the classroom the books [and they let them there until Saturday]. And they didn't have to write on Saturdays. They compiled the timetable intentionally or accidentally [or it was the schoolmaster who allowed this] in such a way that they didn't have to write, as a Jewish child is forbidden to write on Sabbath. And Saturday evening, after dark they brought home the coursebooks. A catholic gymnasium for example was

capable of this. World was different then! Such a world that this could have happened. When my brother got here in Marosvasarhely, he wasn't religious anymore. In Maramarossziget he didn't attend the cheder, my grandfather taught him enough - my mother stipulated that what my grandfather taught him was enough. That was too bad, because he taught so much the poor child: he woke him up at dawn, and he went to bed late in order to learn, so that he became an atheist by the time he got here.

We had a good relationship, though he was spanked many times because of me. I was a bad child, because I always wanted his toys, of course. I wanted to play football, to climb the trees. He went with his sixteen-seventeen years old friends to pick raspberry in the wood. And I was crying to take me with him. They had to play football with me. What was to do with a snotty child? They put me to keep the goal, but they played in front of the other goal. I noticed that, and I started to bite my hands and to claw myself, and I went home. As I was approaching our house, I shouted: 'Sanyi beat me, Sanyi did this, Sanyi did that!' And when Sanyi came home, he got some slaps. He was saying that he didn't do anything, but they didn't believe him. Luckily for me once a worker returning from the factory saw me clawing myself with a willow branch in my hand. Everybody knew the director's children, so he asked me: 'Belluska, what are you doing?' 'Well, nothing.' Then the worker followed me, and he saw why my brother was getting slaps and beatings. He came in and said: 'Madam, please forgive me, but don't beat Sanyika, because I saw the girl biting and clawing her arm.' Thus I got beaten. Sanyi was spanked many times because of me. I started to smoke in a similar way. He was smoking. I asked him a puff. 'Go away, you snotty!' 'Won't you give me? I will tell them that you stole the cigarettes from daddy's drawer!' 'Here you have, snotty, smoke!' Of course I was dying of smoking it, I was coughing, stifling, but after three days I was blackmailing him again. I kept on doing this until I was seventeen-eighteen, when I started to smoke on my own.