

Margit Toth, Laszlo Toth And Erzsebet Barsony



This photo was taken in Kispest after the war, around 1946.

The dresses were made by my sister [Margit Toth, nee Bauer], I still have mine in my closet.

Margit's husband Laszlo Toth is sitting in the middle, Margit is on his left, I am on his right. The dog sitting in my lap is Buksi, [my son] Pubi's [Ervin Fenyes] dog, who lived for a while after the war.

I was the only one from my family who returned from the war, nobody else did. The fact that my sister survived is a miracle, because many of those who remained at home perished too, because there was bombing and the siege and things like that.

My sister didn't feel the danger she was in. She was just waiting for us to come home. I got home with nothing but the clothes on me. Strangers lived in my house, and they received me with such hostility, as if I were I don't know what.

My sin was that the house was mine. Five families lived in my house, and the occupants of the house were bossing everyone about like the communists. I wasn't even able to put in a word. I couldn't go to stay there.

My sister told me to stay with them, of course. But as a matter of fact I was in an awful state then. I lost my confidence. It is very difficult to remember this, because this is an awful period of my life, I couldn't get over all that had happened; it wasn't possible in a short time.

My only desire was to die, because I thought that I couldn't survive this. My sister could hardly raise my spirit.

I was only sorry for my sister, because she was so happy that I had arrived, and she had a lot of plans.

She had opened the shop before I arrived, because she had got a notice that relatives could open the shops which had been closed before, but if nobody opened them from the family they would have been given to someone else.

To make sure that my shop wouldn't be lost, she opened it, but it had been completely robbed. Nobody wanted hats; they started making Russian soldier caps. They went with a truck in front of the shop for the caps.

Those who were smart could get hold of many things in this period, but my sister was afraid of everything. Once a Russian soldier brought her a bag of flour, but she didn't accept it.

At first I tried to fit into my sister's life. I went to the shop, kept my sister's household, went shopping, cooked, cleaned. They were busy all day long. They had their office in Pest, her husband was an architect, and worked all over the place and my sister managed the office.

They had very much work, because of the reconstruction, because the whole country was in ruins. The construction engineers had a lot of work.

They had their income too; they didn't feel the need of anything. I can't complain either, because they were respecting all my desires. I didn't want to give up the shop, because I was hoping to get on somehow.

One shop had been given up anyway, the one which had been my husband's. If I had opened that one, I would have been luckier with it, because textile shops were still going well, but the hat shop wasn't.

So I kept the shop until around 1947, I paid the rent. I had no income, and 90 percent of my wealth got lost, because all the things I gave to this and that got lost; I didn't get anything back.