

Juci Scheiner And Jeno Schonbrunn With Flat Mates



This picture was taken in our home in Samuel Koteles Street, at Christmas 1955. We had four rooms there, and a family stayed in each room. I'm the first from left in the second row. Beside me are my cousin, Eva Deutsch, nee Moskovits, and her husband, Gyula Deutsch.

The handsome boy, second from left in the second row, finally got a room and got married. He married a Romanian girl, Liana (first from right), but she spoke Hungarian as we did. The father of the boy was the owner of a soap factory, his name was Brechner, I think he was of German origin. First from left in the first row is a visitor, and beside him is my first husband, Jeno Schonbrunn. In his lap is the daughter of one of my girlfriends. Beside them are my brother Andras Mestitz's wife, Julia Mestitz, nee Kiss, 'Mr.' Pocok, as we called her child, in her lap, and then Andras. The lady with her head resting on her hands is Julia's mother.

I lived with Jeno in one of them, Andras and his family lived in another one, then there was Gyula Deutsch and his family - the son of mom's older sister, Margit - and in the last one, there was another couple. Buba, as we called Gyula, built a house, and they moved in there. When they moved out, the mother of Andras' wife, Julia, moved into their room. We shared the kitchen, but everybody cooked for themselves. Each of us had their chores: one cleaned the stove, one washed the dishes and another cooked. They always made fun of me when I went into the kitchen, because I used to say, 'Everybody get away from the stove, it's my turn.' [Juci was joking that they should let her get to the stove.] For example, when someone wanted to have supper or lunch, they used to say, 'So, are you coming?' Anyone who wanted, went to eat, the rest didn't, but usually we all ate together.

We always celebrated birthdays together and used to give each other presents. However, we didn't observe the Jewish, nor the Christian holidays. Only at Christmas we put up a Christmas tree for the sake of the son of my brother, Pocok. We didn't celebrate any of the communist holidays, apart

from the obligatory street processions. There were occasions when we celebrated 1st May, but we were only fooling around.

Once Jenó and I went out for supper somewhere and came home early. It was dark in the house, and we thought everybody was already asleep. When we came in, the light was suddenly turned on, and they came in hand in hand and started dancing around us, like fools. They were singing: 'Fol fol ti rabjai a foldnek?' ['Arise, ye starvelings, from your slumbers...'], from the Socialist Internationale]. They only sang it to make fun of us. When they stopped we looked around and saw our room had been decorated. We laughed our heads off. There was a couch there, a glass-case and, next to that, another couch. Mom had a piece of red paper underneath, to highlight them. In front of the glass-case there was a table covered with a red blanket, with a jug of water and a glass on it, in case someone wanted to make a speech. I had made the beds before we left because I didn't know when we would come home, and to spare us that effort. The quilt was tucked up on the bed, and pinned on to the sheet with a thousand stickpins, cut out of red paper: there was the phrase 'Long live 1st May' in Romanian and Hungarian. The letters and the numbers were all cut out and pinned on to the bedsheet. There was something on the pillow, too. The same thing was on Jenó's bed. This started off a party that lasted until 6 in the morning. We had a lot of fun.