

Zsuzsa Diamantstein In The Main Square Of Marosvasarhely



This picture is an amateur snapshot and it was taken in the main square of Marosvasarhely. I don't know who took it, but my aunt Aliz Mittelmann (my mother's younger sister) is in it, in a dark dress, behind her that's uncle Gabi and the other lady is my aunt's friend, Mrs. Klein, the wife of a dentist called Dezso Klein. I'm standing in front of them.

As far as I remember this picture wasn't taken on any particular occasion, we were just walking. Then people used to walk in the main square of Marosvasarhely, at noon or towards the evening. The big building in the back is the Apollo building, and it was right in the center of the main square, and is still there. [The Apollo Palace is on Rozsa square no. 5. Count Samuel Teleki built it in 1820-22 with the idea that from the revenues it would have brought they could have covered the expenses of the Teleki Teka related to the acquisition of new books and the wages of the personnel. There were stores on the ground floor, flats on the first floor and a lodge on the second floor, where they used to keep balls and later dramatic performances. The Albert Burger brewery owner bought and altered the building in 1923. From 1923 the Hungarian Elite Casino was functioning on the ground floor of the building, and between 1969-1996 it accommodated the Student House. Now the folk art school, different political parties, as well as the RMDSZ and the Pro Europa league have their headquarters there - from the Marosvasarhelyi utikalausz (Guide to Marosvasarhely), Impress, Marosvasarhely, 2000.]

The picture was taken in the morning and it had to be in the spring because I wore fabric clothes. It was a sailor suit, the then fashion, and it was made of dark blue fabric, so it wasn't summer yet, it was rather springtime. On these occasions we used to walk up and down the main square, people used to do that then. I rarely went to the candy store, I had no reason for that because we got enough sweets at home. We ate some ice-cream in the summer, if we got or bought some, but otherwise I wasn't a fan of the candy stores.

The main square of Vasarhely was full of Jewish stores. There was Vamos' big textile store, he was a very decent merchant, we loved him very much because one could buy things there on installments, especially the families with fixed incomes. Every family had a grocer, a store they used to buy from, and ordered the goods they needed for a month, they wrote it down in a book, which everybody kept for themselves, and probably the merchant had one, too. And usually the store apprentice brought the goods to the house, because they didn't buy one kg of sugar then, but a quantity enough let's say for a month. If the customers realized they need something else, they just went to the store and wrote it in the booklet. On the first day of the next month, when my father got his salary, he went to pay the debt and they settled the bill.

We had a sewing woman who used to come to us for many years, she made everything we needed, transformed clothes because my parents didn't buy new clothes all the time, they altered, replaced and fixed the old clothes very often. My mother only had the overcoats sewed by a tailor. Everybody had his own tailor, our was called Bence, and his tailor shop was in a little private house, opposite to the Albina building.