

The Kaufmann Girls And Their Friends



This picture was taken in 1939 in our house in Nagykaroly, in the dining room. I'm the first one on the left. Next to me is my sister Anci [Anna Fuchs, nee Kaufmann], then Berkes, Rozsi Ignac, Manyi [Margit] Kaufmann and Miska Politzer.

I remember the day it was taken, I even recall that we wore pullovers at first, then we changed to summer clothes. Berkes was courting Rozsi Ignac, while Politzer was courting my sister Anci. In the end Politzer didn't marry my sister because we were poor and he had higher standards. He was from a well-off family, and was the only child, but his mother was very concerned about her only son. She was very selfish and proud, so no one could impress her. Even though we were a good family, we were poor, and she wouldn't let him marry my sister. But, in the end, he married a poor girl.

Anci used to go to Cegled to spend her summer holidays, with our cousins. We kept in touch with our relatives. She gained some weight there, because when they ate they always sent her to the kitchen for something, 'Go to the kitchen and bring this! Bring a spoon, bring this or that.' And they used to put some more food on her plate. She thought she had left the food on her plate and ate it, and it was terrible how much weight she put on. They laughed at her because she didn't notice the others were putting more and more food on her plate. When she came home, she was very fat.

When I went to the middle school in Maramarossziget, I lived at Uncle Sandor's place for two years. He was my mother's older brother. Laci was already living in Paris by then. They had a four-room apartment with bathroom on Rozsa Street. The house is still there. It was a luxury to have a bathroom then. I liked Sziget because I had family there and they supported me; they were very nice. We didn't go to the synagogue too often. The children didn't, only the men used to go to the synagogue, women less, only on high holidays. However, I attended religion class. Our teacher was Dr. Samuel Danczig, the Neolog rabbi of Sziget. I don't know which university he had graduated from, but he finished a rabbi school, and was Dr. Danczig: he had a PhD title. He was a gentleman, an enlightened one. He had a small goatee, as far as I remember. He always wore a small kippah.

After I graduated I went back to Nagykaroly and got a job. I worked at an insurance company called Generali, I was a typist. My boss was Roth, a Jew. Even back then one could insure his house, life, anything. Then I ended up in Budapest, when Northern Transylvania was annexed to Hungary in 1940, according to the Second Vienna Dictate, because the insurance company went bankrupt and I had no prospect in Nagykaroly. I first got a job as a worker at an umbrella factory. The owners of the factory were my uncle's good friends. And my mother used to send me packages, even though they were poor. Oh, God! I rented a room, because Uncle Erno's wife wouldn't let me stay with them under any circumstances. I stayed on Terez boulevard, at No. 50. I rented a room from Aron Berliner, a Jewish teacher. They were nice and honest people, his wife was much younger than him.