

Margit Erdos



This is a picture of my mother, Margit Erdos, nee Brichta, in an open-air swimming pool. The photo was taken in Budapest at Easter 1938. My mother was born in 1894. She attended the upper school for girls in Kassa, and she prayed fervently that she could study as well, but they [her parents] told her, "No way, you are beautiful, you must get married." Her two sisters weren't ugly either, but my mother was the most beautiful. They didn't allow her to be educated. She attended the teachers' training school run by the nuns in Kassa. My mother got married to father, Lajos Erdos, in 1914 when she was 20 years old, and they moved to Budapest. I think the marriage was an arranged one. I was born in 1918. My mother never wanted to teach, she didn't like it, and her family forced upon her the teachers' training school. She was always busy at home. But from time to time she found something to do. For instance, she got through the examination as a tailor, then she sewed over-garments; she also had a few employees. And then she did something else. Sometime at the end of the 1930s it suddenly came into vogue that when the spring came, straw hats were dyed

and women wore these. Mother observed this very early on. At first she crocheted it by herself, then she gave the work out to others. But by July it went out of fashion. And then the whole thing ended. About ten years later she was knitting gloves, scarf, panties and everything of mohair. At that time I was also knitting, no, I spun rabbit hair on the spinning wheel. I observed very soon that my father's family looked awry at my mother because she didn't fit in. They were all conservatives, with an old fashioned Jewish mentality; my mother had progressive mentality; in 1926 she had her hair shingled - which was a terrible deed - and she smoked. No woman dared to do this in my father's family. Her dressing, her behavior? She was fashionable. Besides, she was younger than them. They were envious of her and didn't love her. My mother didn't really come with us on holidays to grandmother's place. But there were occasions when she did meet the relatives, too. For example, my richest uncle, Sandor, when he rented a flat in Budapest, had to be visited. She went once or twice to my other uncle, these were visits for birthdays or holidays. I went [to pay a visit to our relatives] with my father more often, and I understood that that's how it was.