

Lea Merenyi, Her Younger Brother Istvan And Younger Sister Zsuzsa



These are the three Schuller children. This is me (on the left), my brother Istvan, and my sister Zsuzsa (in front of us). The photo was taken in Germany in 1928. Zsuzsa and I were born more than ten years apart. My mother had very shattered nerves, she couldn't support the little baby, she was a late-born child. From the moment she stopped nursing my sister - she nursed her for quite a long time - she gave her in my hands. My sister and I were very close. In fact I raised her. So much so that later, after the war, I was at their place in Pest many times. I spent every Sunday afternoon with them, and if I had any complaints, she always told me, 'what do you want, you raised me!?' So she was so much handed over to me that I brought her up completely. In Hanover I had school-mates, friends, we celebrated the birthdays, we lived a completely normal civil life, and that time nobody made us feel that there was a problem. My mother didn't let us read newspapers. Now I think she obviously did it because people said nasty things about Jews at that time already. But this is just a guess. 'Politics is not for you,' my mother said. Politics wasn't a topic in our family at all. So we didn't even know what was about to happen. We were raised as Christians, and I didn't know that I was Jewish until 1932, when I came back to Budapest, I had no idea about it. I was raised in the Reformed faith. Our life had no Jewish character whatsoever, I didn't know anything besides that one visit to the synagogue. I considered myself a Christian, and it's interesting, that neither the teachers nor my classmates treated me as a Jew at the German school, though it could be seen on me, they had to see it that I was of Jewish origin.