

In The Canteen



This photo was taken roughly ten years ago in the Jewish canteen [the man on the right in the back with the hat is Gyorgy and beside him his friend, Feri Karp]. There was some sort of gathering, but I do not know exactly what the occasion was. There are two or three festivities in a year when the chief rabbi comes or a delegation from Bucharest. Photos are taken on such occasions, not at religious festivals. The chief rabbi or the president from Bucharest delivers a speech if the meeting is in the morning, they have a half hour of prayer, which they would have had anyway without the crowd. I do not know the rest of the people in the photo, it must be by chance that only men can be seen. There was a chief rabbi called Rosen, he controlled the Jews of Romania with an iron fist and he was a good organiser. He organised this network of canteens in Romania. There are different categories of fees: there are people who get the food for free, there are who get it on a bargain price, mostly young people who can prove that they are of Jewish descent and there are those who get it for full price. There are about thirty people who pick up the food on behalf of others who cannot come to the canteen. The canteen is closed on Saturdays and Sundays. The food for the weekend is shared out on Fridays. The food is kosher and that is why it is dull and sour cream cannot be used. For Saturdays they give cholent as a Jewish speciality. There is a possibility to choose from two kinds of soup and second course for the weekend. There always is fruit soup and either meat or vegetable soup, and for the second course there is a slice of meat with the cholent or mashed potatoes. There are also pickles and a piece of homemade cake. We do not eat with our hats on, but everybody puts on a small cap; there is a woman who gives them to everybody or people bring their own kipas.