

Ladislav Porjes As A Child



I was born in the year 1921 in Zilina. At the age of three, when this picture was taken, I became a complete orphan. I unfortunately don't have any direct memories of my mother [Ilona Projesova, nee Moskovicova], I know only a little of her life as mediated by things told to me by my grandmother and aunties. For my mother died while giving birth to my unborn sibling of something that today would apparently be called an ectopic pregnancy. At least that's how my grandma used to tell it to me as a small boy. But when I was a little older, my aunties told me that things had happened a little differently. My aunties said that my mother, Ilonka, was a downright angel. However the cause of her premature death was apparently her own mother. You see, when Grandma Fany arrived in Zilina to see her daughter and ten-month-old tot, she found out that my mother was pregnant again. She persuaded my mother to secretly have an abortion, without my

father, who was at that time on a longer business trip, knowing about it, so that she wouldn't ruin her figure with another childbirth. Grandma dredged up some midwife, who however botched the procedure, and my mother died of blood poisoning. She was not quite 21 at the time. When I was not quite three years old, my father [Arpad Porjes] died from consequences of an amateurishly treated wound that he had gotten on the Italian front during World War I, where he had fought as a cadet for one year. Thus I became an utter orphan. I grew up with my grandparents - partly the Porjeses took care of me, my father's parents in Zilina, where we spoke Slovak and German. Partly the Moskovics took care of me, my mother's parents in Michalovce, with whom I spoke the Zemplin dialect and Yiddish. The conditions in both families, as far as religion goes, were quite different. The Moskovics were Orthodox, while the Porjeses were Neolog Jews.