

The Pressburgers In The Chatam Sofer Memorial



This photograph was taken in the crypt of Chatam Sofer (Chatam Sofer Memorial) in Bratislava, in the year 2005. The picture shows me and my son Yoram, inspecting the grave of Rabbi Pressburger. We've been to Bratislava only once, about a year after the regime changed. It was quite a difficult encounter for me. Bratislava, which I left fifty years ago, as I've reminisced, was different. Petržalka is different, Zidovska Street disappeared, the main synagogue was torn down. The stores also functioned in a very communist fashion, they were dark. I got a very unpleasant feeling, though I tried to show my wife a little of Bratislava's beauty. We were at the castle, where I could never go in the past. During the First Republic, the first Czechoslovak Republic, the castle was closed. It wasn't open to the public. So after such a difficult impression nothing draws me to Bratislava any more. I really didn't have anyone in Bratislava, no one remained there, while in Prague there were relatives that accepted us warmly. Bratislava doesn't really entice me. I'm giving this interview right after making good on my intentions to show Bratislava and Slovakia to my son and his family. It was an interesting and moving visit. Especially encounters with remnants of Jewish life there and outings in that beautiful countryside and a visit to the region of my partisanship. Bratislava is very different from my Bratislava. Somehow I didn't fall in love with the new one. Even the beautifully restored old town with countless restaurants failed to enthuse me. I think that everyone of my generation, when it comes to the question how Bratislava should have evolved to have stayed beautiful, pleasant and express its spirit, would agree that it should have been different.