

Iren Fekete's Family



This is a picture of my aunt Iren Fekete, nee Mestitz, my uncle Jozsef Fekete, and their children Sandor, first from left, and Laszlo. They had three children but one of them, Istvan, doesn't seem to be in this picture. The photo was taken in Budapest. The way the boys are dressed was the fashion at the time. Aunt Iren was born in 1873. She moved to Budapest in 1908, but I don't know anything else about her. She died in Budapest in 1941. Uncle Jozsef, her husband, was an engineer, teacher

and principal in a vocational college, opposite Zsigmond Kemeny Street. When they said that if he converted, he could be promoted to the ministry, but if he didn't he would be demoted to an inferior position, he accepted it. In 1908 he Magyarized his name Schwartz [black in German] to Fekete [black in Hungarian]. His 'godfather' was the under-secretary or one of the ministers. He became an under-secretary at the Ministry of Education. His merits were rewarded with the 'Nagynfalvi' title of nobility. They had three children: Sandor, Istvan and Laszlo. Sandor, the oldest one, became a doctor. He was the director of the National Stefania Institute of Pediatrics in Budapest and committed suicide when he was 32 years old. Istvan died at the age of 16 or 17, while Laszlo disappeared somewhere in Brazil. Uncle Jozsef was already an under-secretary by the time the photo was taken. I know they told Misi, my brother, when he visited them, not to tell the doorman he was Jewish. For him, an under-secretary, it would have been unseemly to be visited by Jews. Once, when I went to Budapest, Aunt Iren invited me for a cup of tea. I dressed up elegantly and we went together to Gellert, just the two of us. There were at least thirty tables arranged in a 'U' shape, and in the middle, there was a band playing. We went to the end of the row of tables, to the back, to avoid that I would be asked to dance by anybody. [That's how Juci thought about her aunt's idea of where they should sit.] Then, on the way, Aunt Iren said she wanted to have a word with me. The previous day they had had some guests, I don't know who, the wife and daughter of a dignitary, I think. After they left, Uncle Jozsef went to the bathroom and found some mascara there and asked whose garbage this was. Auntie Iren didn't want Uncle Jozsef to tell off her lady-friends, and told him it was all Juci's. And she asked me not to tell him - if by any chance he asked me - that the mascara wasn't mine. That's why she invited me for tea. This really hurt my feelings.