

Hermina Sebestyen And Her Son, Erno



My maternal grandmother, Hermina Sebestyen nee Schon with her oldest boy, Erno. It was written on the picture, probably in my grandmother's hand, that Ernoke was seventeen months old. It was a millenium memorial picture, and on the front it says: "Budapest, 1896, Photographers Union". I don't know for what occasion the picture was taken. She has a huge hat on. I never saw it before, they were pretty old. My mother had three siblings, two boys and a girl. Erno was the oldest. There was quite a big age difference between him and the next child. Both the boys, Erno and Lajos were trained as lawyers, and for my grandfather to afford that expense, his two daughters had to find husbands from wealthy families. That was the cost of educating the boys. The girls succeeded.

Note well, that the boys couldn't really practice because, by the time they were qualified, the Jewish laws came in. The older brother, my uncle Erno Sebestyen, probably lawyered a little bit, but Lajos never did. I have a lot of personal memories of Uncle Erno, but I didn't have a close relationship with him. He was a curious man, and because of his political views, there were a lot of arguments with him. He lived for a long time in Germany. ...[He?] been working in Germany in the 1930s, in the time of Hitler, as a commercial agent, was a little dazed by what the Germans were producing, Hitler's products. There were a lot of bloody arguments within the family because of that, they couldn't understand how a Jew could vouch for anything the Germans did. He died not so long ago, fifteen years ago. After the war, I didn't really have a good relationship with him, mostly because of his wife, who was quite a strange woman. Maybe she wanted the best for us, but she lorded over me, at the same time never offering love or her home. So we were distant, once or twice a year we met, and then only in secret so his wife wouldn't know about it. I got a bit closer with his wife during the two weeks before his death, I visited daily, helped her; it was a difficult time, he was over eighty, and got a broken hip joint, which never healed.