

Rachel Schonfeld And Her Grandchildren



The photograph was taken in 1926, probably at the seaside of the Black Sea. From right to left: Rachel Schonfeld [nee Friedman], my maternal grandmother, together with her grandchildren, my sister, Mira Cotin [nee Mizrahy], and my cousin Marian Solomon.

My maternal grandmother was born in 1865, in Bucharest. She witnessed the instauration of the monarchy, she lived under the rule of all the four kings and she even had the 'luck' to catch the beginnings of the 'people's rule.' As a young lady, she - and other girls from 'respectable families' - had the privilege to collect money for the erection of the Romanian Athenaeum, standing in the Cismigiu Garden, with a basket of flowers in her hand: 'Donate one leu, just one leu, for the stately Athenaeum!' She was a contemporary and a friend of Marioara Ventura, the Romanian actress. She had also met her mother. Stimulated by her entourage, she studied drama and piano. I remember her as a short, neat, stylish old woman with a bright face who worked hard, a mistress of crochet, among other things; this is how she remained until the very last day of her life - she died at the age of 89, in 1954.

My sister Mira was born in 1923 in Bucharest. She was a quiet child and a pupil loved and respected by her schoolmates. She had the misfortune of being 'forced' to take piano lessons at the same time with me; the main reason why my parents did that was not because they wanted to secure her musical education, but because they didn't want to give her an inferiority complex. It took seven years of nightmare until our dear parents could be persuaded that Mira and music had nothing in common!

Marian, my cousin, was born in 1921 in Bucharest. He left on a small boat to Palestine in 1942 and spent six months in Izmir [Turkey], until the British let him stay in Cyprus, in 1943. After one year and a half he got to Palestine. He never returned to Romania.