

Marim Haller At A Masked Ball



This is I, Marim Haller, dressed as a grape - at a masked ball. I believe a masked ball was organized on Purim, and I was disguised as a grape. I also had a mask, you had to disguise your face, but I wasn't wearing it in this photograph. The year written on the back of the photograph reads 1936, so I was 21.

I used to go to the cinema every now and then, and the odd ball. There were balls organized by Jews. The ballroom was rented. There were several ballrooms. One was located where the cinema

still stands nowadays - the Popovici hall. It housed a movie theatre. And the cinema was suspended when a ball was organized, and it became a ballroom. Usually, it was Gypsies who played at balls, they were the ones who provided the music. But they could play Jewish music very well and they played it at balls. I wasn't too keen on dancing. I couldn't dance very well, I only knew a couple of dances. Well, when the partner would lead during the tango, I would dance, but when it came to other dances... I never waltzed. I didn't know how to waltz. There were also meetings of the Jewish youth, and I used to attend those. Several activities were performed there... There was also a Jewish library, and they conducted reviews of the books in the library, they would discuss a specific book, analyze it, everyone offered their opinion. We used to meet at a classmate's place on many occasions and began discussing books, authors.

When I was a child on Purim we were invited over at my uncle's, Avram Klein, and a large table was laid, with all the children, his sister, we all got together. It was beautiful! We ate, talked, laughed, sang. I forget what songs we used to sing. I don't have a musical voice and that's why I didn't even remember the songs. I believe that we, the children, used to wear masks. I used to go out of the house, put the mask on, go inside again, they pretended not to recognize me... I was little! I think my cousins wore masks as well. And other people came, sang. And they were given money, food. Jews came as well, there were all sorts of people. The Jews [acquaintances, friends] paid visits to each other. Grown-ups didn't wear masks. For you didn't even let them in if they wore masks - you couldn't know whom you were dealing with.

On Purim my mother baked cakes. Hamantashen were ever-present. I myself bake hamantashen today, and offer them to the people I know. And that's how it was, people sent each other cakes, they offered them to you when you visited them. And you would keep hamantashen to last you from Purim until Passover, in order to have them as farfostan before Easter. To farfost - that's how they say in Jewish -, meaning that you had a meal before fasting. You ate whatever food you had, a good, full meal, and at the end, you also had hamantashen for desert. And that was a closure, you didn't eat bread for 8 days, during Passover. Farfostan occurred several times a year, both on Passover, and before Iom Kipar [Yom Kippur]. [Editor's note: Before the beginning of the fast, on the afternoon before Yom Kippur there is the "seuda mafseket", the traditional meal before the fast. The word farfostan is the Yiddish variant of the German word Vorfasten, which means 'before the fast.']