

Marim Haller With Lady-Friends



This is I, Marim Haller, the one on the right, with Anuta Dermer on my left and with her sisters. The date on the back of the photograph reads 8th June 1939; the photograph was taken here, in Botosani, somewhere in the old city center. I still have this hat to this day.

Anuta Dermer was a friend of mine from the school days, and even afterwards. She too was Jewish. We weren't classmates, she attended the theoretical high school, I studied commerce, but we were friends, we lived very close to each other for a while. She married and moved to Bucharest afterwards, and I have no news of her anymore, I lost contact with her.

There were very many Jews in Botosani before World War II. There were more than 10,000 Jews living in Botosani back then. [By means of immigrations from Galicia, "through natural growth," the

number of Jews was going to increase significantly: in 1832, there were approximately 1477 Jews living here; in 1930 - approximately 12,000 Jews, today there are only 125 left. The Jewish Community of Botosani.

http://www.romanianjewish.org/ro/mosteniri_ale_culturii_judaice_03_11_10.html] There were only Jewish stores throughout the old downtown area: manufacture shops, stores selling colonial products, an inn, 2 restaurants - there were all kinds of stores. All the traders in downtown Botosani were Jewish. There was Moscovici, Oizderovici, there were many of them. There was only one Christian trader - his name was Anchele.

There were youth organizations, Zionist organizations. Such as the Hashomer Hatair, I don't remember any other. But I couldn't attend the meetings as I was at work, and I didn't enter that organization. I didn't have that much spare time, since I was working for my subsistence. I was working very hard. I even put in extra hours until late into the night, and I was tired. Both school and work at the same time. Do your homework, this and that - I had no spare time.

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.