

Eveline Ciocoiu As A Child



This is a photograph of me as a small child; I was scared of something. I was 3 at the time.

This photograph was taken in a photo studio, at Gheorghiu photo cabinet, I believe, which was located on Galati St., near downtown; there is a library there nowadays.

My maiden name is Eveline Basch, I was born in December 1932, and my married name is Ciocoiu.

I had a brother, Silviu, who was older than me, he being the firstborn, in 1929. I also have a sister, Grete, who was born in December 1936 and has been living in Israel since 1970.

We lived on Sfantu Petru St., or Petru Maior as it is called nowadays. Formerly, its name was 'The Jewish Street,' because many Jews lived on that street back then.

The house where we lived didn't belong to my parents. I remember that there was Studio type furniture there, which was fairly rare in those days, and hand-made rugs on the floor.

People had sofas in those days, but we had a Studio bed with a chest. We had a nice bedroom.

There were six rooms all in all. It was customary in my parents' family to adorn the walls with various paintings.

My parents also had books, mainly literature. And they always kept pets: birds and a dog.

I was little during the war but I lived with the fear that they were going to take us to Bug. We waited with our luggage packed because we knew that Jews and Gypsies were taken to Bug.

[Ed. note: Mrs. Ciocoiu is referring to the deportations to Transnistria.] Whenever we saw someone carrying a briefcase we thought they were coming to take us there. I was exposed to anti-Semitism even as a small child.

I was tormented by the complex of not being able to attend the same school as my friends living on our street. We, the children on our street, would organize these school parties to support the soldiers.

We collected money and took cigarettes and food to the wounded. One of my girl friends, who lived in our neighborhood, said that she no longer wanted to be the 'Jews' buffoon.' No matter what people say, one could feel the anti-Semitism.

I attended the Catholic kindergarten when I was little. After kindergarten, I attended primary school, which is to say 4 primary grades, at a Jewish school called 'Baroneasa de Hirsch,' because in those days during the war we couldn't attend other schools.

[Ed. note: In October 1940, Jewish pupils and students were denied access to public education of all degrees. The Jewish people were free to organize private primary and secondary schools. The Jewish schools were allowed to function but they weren't allowed to be advertised. The graduation diplomas were not recognized by the state and had no practical validity regarding the graduate's admission into a profession.]

Braila was one of the towns that had a Jewish school. There were very many cities in Moldavia, in Iasi, for instance, where Jews received no education during the four years of war, because they couldn't attend anywhere.

[Ed. note: Mrs. Ciocoiu is probably referring to the fact that they weren't admitted in state schools, yet there were Jewish schools in Iasi during the war, and in other regions as well, wherever there were enough Jewish pupils to form at least one class.]

During my first year of high school I attended the Schäffer High School, this corresponds to the fifth grade in secondary school nowadays. I attended there for one year.

Afterwards, I studied with the nuns, at Sancta Maria [Saint Mary], until 1948 when the educational reform took place. That was a school that was allowed to be advertised and the high school was very good.

Classes were taught in Romanian, but I was learning German as well. I studied the history of the arts, painting, musical instruments, foreign languages and much knowledge.

I learned Hebrew in school, but I was a catastrophe and it was very difficult for me. However, I can speak German and French. I managed to get by fairly well when I traveled to Germany and in the course of a week I was speaking fluent German. But if you don't speak a language on a regular basis, you are bound to forget it.

I received private lessons at home: piano lessons and French lessons. Mademoiselle Lambert, who was French, used to teach me French. On the whole, I believe that my parents tried to give us the education they didn't receive.

My private lessons ended when the communists came to power.