

Zsuzsa Diamantstein



This is a picture of me when I was three years old, in July 1925 in Marosvasarhely, in the studio of Weintraub and Juliska Foszto, I remember that. As far as I know Weintraub's studio existed right until the deportation. This Weintraub was a Jew, but Juliska Foszto wasn't, and later they separated in the end. It seems they were still together here.

It could be it was taken on my birthday, because I was born in June. Another reason could be that they wanted to immortalize these beautiful pajamas I had on. These were light blue pajamas with white fur. I either remember the pieces or I know them from the [family] stories. I don't know anymore, but I'm sure this was light blue velvet.

I finished elementary school in the Jewish school, which was on Horea street, the school number 4 is there at the moment. The Jewish school had six classes, I finished four. Usually those who want to continue the studies finished four classes, and so they reached in the local middle school, or in the lyceum. Who wasn't well-to-do enough, finished the six classes, but it wasn't obligatory, but four classes were. It was a wonderful school. We had an educator, Ferenc Rado, which kind you could rarely find in our days. Uncle Rado was an excellent man, he could attend masterfully with the children, he was very patient, he had answers for all of our questions, he could tell stories about everything, and I really loved him. I always told, that what I know, I know it from him. The principal, Jenő Moskovits [Editor's note: he was Eva Deutsch's father, and Centropa made an interview with Eva, as well] was an extremely honest, very kind man, but he taught another form. Ferenc Rado was our educator during the four grades. In the school, in elementary school and middle school, we learned in Romanian, but at religion class we learnt in Hebrew. We learned the

Hebrew letters from the prayer-book, and the religious things usually from the Bible - we learned everything from uncle Rado during the religion classes. After I finished elementary school, I used to go to uncle Rado to chat with him.

They used to organize very nice festivities in the Jewish school. We held the most important performances in the Jewish community center, but during the year there were self-culture clubs in the school, which they held in the Jewish school: they used to read out poems and humorous things. Uncle Rado and another educator, Boske Rosenfeld, poor her didn't come back from the deportation, put together once a tale of Purim, and it was a nice performance. Children performed it: one of my classmates was Queen Esther, she was a very beautiful girl, called Eva Citrom (she didn't dare to come back from the deportation because she didn't behave very well there), one of my boy classmates was Haman, there was a Mordecai and another classmate was Ahasuerus. The tale was about Ahasuerus who wanted to get married and different girls were taken to him, a Bedouin, a Turkish and a Jewish girl and he chose the Jewish girl. I was one of the girls, I got from somebody a very elegant Turkish woman's dress, and everybody said he should have chosen me instead of the Jewish girl, because I had such a beautiful dress...

There were very nice balls and performances at the Jewish community center. [Editor's note: the building became later the Progres cinema, on Tipografiei street no. 4. It was built in 1928, with the support of the Jewish community for cultural purposes. It was the scene of many celebrations, literary and religious gatherings. The Yiddish theatres from Iasi and Vilna used to perform there. From the 1930s, a cinema functioned in the building]. Once, the Jewish elementary school performed there the Blue Bird (by Maeterlinck). It was a splendid performance. [Editor's note: Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949) Nobel laureate (1911) Belgian prose-writer. He wrote symbolic dramas. The mentioned piece is a fairy play with 6 scenes.] The entire school participated in the Blue Bird piece, which did not involve any singing, but dances. Because the tale had many parts, the school wasn't able to perform all of them.

The tale was about two children who were trying to find the blue bird, they went to many places and the narrators told things about those places. They managed to link the stories this way. I wasn't a great actor, but I was chosen to play one of the narrators. The other one was Andras Mestitz [Julia Sheiner's younger brother of, (nee Mestitz)], who was one grade higher than me. The whole teaching staff of the school helped us to mount the piece. This was a very nice, serious performance. The parents were our audience.