

Anna Eva Gaspar As A Young Lady



This is me at my father Hugo Schwartz's place. It was taken in Hungary, I was around thirteen-fourteen. I had beachwear on, with white and green pattern, with an open back, just like those you see these days. I had a little bolero for it to cover my back, because it was too conspicuous, of course. If you went to a lido, and before you put on the swimsuit, you could take off the bolero, but otherwise it wasn't fashionable to walk on the street with it. And I really loved this small dress. We had a sewing woman, Bozsi [Erzsebet], she made it for me, she was very skilled. The picture was taken by my brother with his own camera. I am especially fond of this picture. I have very nice memories from the time I spent at my father.

My parent's marriage wasn't a subject of conversation, it took place probably in Zerind, but I don't know exactly. They had both a civil and a religious marriage, and it was particularly difficult for them to divorce. It took quite a long time, but my grandparents insisted on the divorce. After they divorced, my mother assumed again her maiden name, and was registered as Olga Weiss. After they divorced, my mother remained single and so did my father. My mom's photo was all the time on my father's desk. He claimed my grandmother was the one who separated them. To be honest, my grandmother was a damn bad woman. It's not nice to say this, but she was a very bad woman. And I believe she separated my parents. But I never found out why.

After my parents got married, they lived in Alsoszopor, because my mother got an estate there as a marriage portion and my father was a farmer there. And the house is still there, even today. Then they divorced and I don't know how they divided the estate after the divorce, I was 3 years old, so I couldn't know and I didn't care much. After my parents divorced, we moved to Varad. I corresponded all the time with my father, he used to visit us twice a year. My father lived in Hungary, in Tornyosnemeti, near the Bohemian-Hungarian border. He was a communicative person - everybody liked him in the village. The half of his estate was in Bohemia and the other half in

Hungary, so he had a permanent pass, I used to go with him quite often to Kassa. He had his share inherited from the family, he managed a part of his sister's and brother-in-law's estate also, and he had his own estates too. Probably he bought more land with his capital. Before 1940 I visited my father every year, and he used to come twice a year to visit us in Varad. In 1940 we were annexed to Hungary, and traveling wasn't a problem anymore. And then we used to visit him almost every summer. When we grew older, my mother allowed us to spend the summer holiday with our father. So we were on good terms, we had no problems.

He used to help us, so he asked all the time what we needed, but I had to answer: 'Thank you, we have all we need.' A child always needs something, but I had to answer that. But he always brought something. He lived in Hungary, he could get more things than us. Not to mention the Bohemian shoes he brought. He brought skating boots, heavy boots and many other things. Once he asked me in a letter what I needed. I wrote him I needed a raincoat. 'All right, please send me your measures.' And we went to a tailor and he took my measures, he added some centimeters to them, not to outgrow the coat until the next year. My father received my letter, he went to the store, and he told he needed a raincoat for his daughter. 'Well, you know, we have to add some centimeters not to be too tight.' And when I put the raincoat on and I looked into the mirror, I almost burst out crying. All of them added some centimeters to the measures, and I was a thin, puny girl. It looked on me like the trousers on a cow. My poor mom said: 'Never mind!' I remember where the tailor in Varad was, in the small marketplace, and he altered it for me. And it became so nice everybody from my class envied me.

At first period I felt awfully at my father's place, probably because I was accustomed to the kosher household. My father didn't observe the Jewish traditions. He had no kosher household. He had a woman cook, a house-maid and everything he wanted. But I couldn't eat the meals made with sour cream. For example I remember I liked squash, but they made it with sour cream, so I couldn't eat that. My father called my mother on the phone and asked her how should they cook for me. There was ham, boiled ham. I got so sick from it I vomited it out, so I wasn't accustomed to the treyf household. Then I got used to it, but I still don't like having sour cream in the meal. We used to spend 2-3 weeks there. At most four weeks, not more. My father had a lady friend, we got acquainted with her, she was a very attractive woman. But my father never got married again. He lived alone in a mansion-like house. We were on good terms with him, we had no problems.