

Ladislav Roth's Father Jeno Roth



My father Jeno Roth with a waiter of Bercsenyi restaurant. This photo was taken on the summer grounds of the restaurant during vacation in Uzhhorod, 1936.

After finishing school my father went to work as an apprentice waiter in Bercsenyi restaurant that belonged to the Jewish family of Szilagyi. The restaurant was in a 2-storied stone building with columns on its facade. There was a big garden with trees and many rose bushes around the building. There was a big hall with a stage for an orchestra and dancing area on the first floor. This hall was often leased for wedding or family parties with a number of guests. There were 3 smaller halls for 8-10 tables upstairs. Here visitors were families with children for the most part. There was also music there, but it was a violinist or a piano player playing there. There was a summer cafe in the garden from spring till autumn when it was warm outside. Visitors could sit outside in the shade of big trees having a glass of wine, a cup of tea with cakes or ice cream. Parents brought their children to this cafe during their walk in the town. When it got dark there were bulbs on tree branches to light the area. It was beautiful. The restaurant opened in the morning when visitors could have breakfast before going to work and closed at midnight. One year later my father began to work as a waiter. He earned well and received good tips too. My father went to study in Uzhhorod Trade School. He worked during day and attended classes in the evening. My father's master paid for his studies: it was very kind of him. My father supported his mother and younger sisters too till they got married.

My parents got marriage in 1920 they had a traditional Jewish wedding with a rabbi and a chuppah. By the time he got married my father worked as senior waiter in Bercsenyi restaurant. My mother was a housewife after she got married. We were wealthy. This lasted until the early 1940s.

My father was a neolog. Neologs were religious, but they didn't have patriarchal looks. They didn't have a beard or payes, they didn't wear a tallit or common for Jews round black hats or black jackets. When I asked my father why neologs didn't have as many Jewish holidays as Hasidim my

father explained that it wasn't necessary to observe all Jewish traditions. It was important to have a heart of a Jew and it didn't matter how one dressed or what holidays one celebrated. It was important to identify oneself as a Jew and that was all. My father wore common clothes and had his hair cut short.

My father had liberal views and sympathized with communists. He didn't join the Communist Party, but he was fond of communist ideas.