

Surica Marcus Leinweber And Arnold Leinweber



This photo features me, Arnold Leinweber (Arnold Marcus at the time of the photo), together with my mother, Surica Marcus Leinweber (nee Froim), in 1921. The photo was taken in Bucharest. I was born on 12th August 1920. My father's last name was Marcus, but he died when I was 8 months old. My mother remarried in 1924 and I was adopted by her new husband. At a very early age [2 or 3 years old], I started going out of the house, and this is how I became familiar with the neighborhood. My mother would lock me inside and go to work; my grandmother would go to her mistresses too, so I would get bored all alone. How long can one stay locked indoors? I would get

out through the window. I would use a stool to climb on the table, which was by the window. This wasn't hard to open. The distance from the window to the ground was small, as our house was rather low, so getting to the courtyard wasn't a problem. I would go on the opposite side of the street, on a waste ground, and come back in the evening, with my hair full of thistles. One day, a lady who lived in the same courtyard razored my curls of hair. Once I jumped through the window, crossed Triumfului St. and Moruzzi St., and reached Nerva Traian St. Then I crossed another little street behind the matzah 'factory' - next to it was the Dobroteasca church, which is still there. So I left my house at the crossroads of Foisorului St. and Triumfului St., I walked seven or eight hundred meters barefoot and wearing just a shirt, and I climbed some wooden stairs to the second or third floor of a place where I knew my grandmother, 'baba', and my mother had gone to visit Aunt Matilda [my mother's sister]. Poor Matilda had died of tuberculosis. She caught it during the war, while attending the wounded and the sick. She was buried on 25th July 1923 [Mr. Leinweber was 3 at the time]. I was familiar with her neighborhood because the girls, my cousins, had taken me there. My mother came to Bucharest with her sister, Liza. She learnt to make brushes and paintbrushes, and she exercised this trade. She owned a workshop built by my biological father, but she couldn't keep it, so she sold it with workers included and ended up working herself in her former workshop. My mother's nature was such that I didn't feel affection from her, and craved it. I saw Auntie Liza play and fool around with her children and I envied them for living this joy of childhood that I was deprived of. My mother's behavior towards me was rather fair and natural, but she never gave me sweetness and affection, and this had an impact on me. So did my finding out I was actually an orphan and the man at home wasn't my father.