

Egon Lovith With His Mother And Sister



This is a picture taken in the yard of our last apartment by the train station in Kolozsvár before our deportation. The picture was taken in 1941 right about when we moved into this place. My little sister Irenke Lovith is the first from the left, my mother Berta Lovith, nee Pardesz, is sitting in the center and I'm standing behind her. By that time Irenke looked elegant. She was an extremely friendly and open kid. Irenke was very attached to me, she was always by my side and we were very close. She was a very funny and sweet girl. She laughed at my figures each time I drew them in her presence. I learned my first funny drawing from a sailor: I drew a Chaplin figure from behind, so there was a wedge like an opening on his tailcoat and I had to push it out with a finger and everyone could see that it was his butt. My dear sister really enjoyed it and I still remember her

laughter. At times when I had some money I would take her hand and we would go to get some candy or ice cream. My mother helped Irenke with her schoolwork. There was a kitchen, a bigger room and a smaller room in the back. Unfortunately, we didn't have a toilet inside the house and we had to go out into the yard because the latrine was near the house opposite. Next to the house there was a vine arbor, which was the only nice thing about the long, unfriendly yard. It was actually the landlord's vine arbor and there was a table and a bench and this was where we sat around during the summer. There were also two moderately wealthy families in the house and the landlord also lived there. We couldn't have had any pets because the place was too small. At the time I was working at the transportation company and we were financially in a very difficult situation. Previously my mother had been working for Ufarom pharmaceutical factory at the time - she had to work with vials and medications - where lots of Hungarians were working, too. [Editor's note: The interviewer refers to Dr. Vilmos Stern's Ufarom Egger pharmaceutical factory.] Among the workers there was no problem about being Jewish. Leftist thinking was already prevalent among them. My mother became really close to them. They worked in the factory under very unhealthy conditions and their hours were very long so they organized a strike and my mother also participated. But the strike was broken up and my mother and all those who participated were fired. My mother was also having heart problems, which she hid from us. It was here, at this apartment, that I used to visit a Romanian family, the Tancas, in the neighborhood who spoke Hungarian wonderfully. We were very close. The father gave me some fruit every time and was very delighted that somebody was visiting Emil, his son. I had been drawing and Emil always wanted me to draw cowboys and Indians for him. He must have liked my drawings a lot and he showed them to everyone and spread the word that I drew things like that. After some time, Hungarian gendarmes came to our home to look for me. To the horror of my grandmother and mother, they took me to the gendarme barracks by the train station and wanted to know who was backing me to advocate American propaganda. What was I going to say: that I was a spy, although I wasn't? Three or four of them surrounded me and started slapping my face so that blood was running down from my nose and eventually I got home that night with a terribly swollen face. So, I did indeed suffer for this friendship.