

Gavril Marcuson As A Boy



This is me, Gavril Marcuson [the initial name, Marcusohn, was shortened to Marcuson in 1968], aged 8, posing as a real gentleman, with a cane and a hat - obviously, they were props. The photo was taken in Bucharest, in 1922, at the 'Julietta' photo cabinet. I was born in Bucharest, on 28th October 1913, in the house of my maternal grandfather, an old house on Viilor Dr. Back then, the place was at the outskirts of the city. Dealul Spirii, the neighborhood where I grew up, was typical for Bucharest. We were neighbors with the Dragos family. Their son became an undersecretary of state during the war [World War II]. Further away lived the family of a Frenchman, Legat, who was a photographer and owned a photo cabinet, the Legat Photo Cabinet. On the opposite side of the street lived an Italian bricklayer whose name was Perisotti. There was also a Romanian shoemaker,

Vasile Anagnoste, a veteran social democratic militant; he was a very intelligent and cultivated man, and I enjoyed talking to him. He had a bordei [Ed. note: very modest house, usually made of clay; a shanty.] on the Uranus blind alley, which he referred to as 'his quarters'. He worked at the Schull footwear factory. There was also a French driver who lived on that blind alley. His son was my schoolmate. His father used to beat him up for nothing with the car crank. Back then, automobiles weren't automatic, so the driver had to insert a crank in front and rotate it until the engine started. Well, the men beat his son with the crank, and I still remember, more than 80 years later, how the boy once told me: 'You've got such a great father!' 'Why do you say that?' I asked him. 'Because he never beats you and he buys you boots!' He was impressed because my father didn't beat me and I was never barefoot. Another schoolmate of mine lived on the blind alley too - his name was Marius Condrea. I remember all our other neighbors: the pretzel maker at the corner, the grocer at another corner. We had our photo taken once in a while - it was a real event. Technology was very different from what it is today. A light was turned on, you were supposed to stay still, and they photographed you. There was a trendy photo cabinet called 'Julietta', located on the corner of Victoriei Ave. with the boulevard, on the spot where an apartment house lies today - one of those geometrical buildings, with nothing but right angles and lines. 'Julietta' was owned by a Jew. I can't remember his name. A second photographer who was in vogue was Mandy, on Campineanu St. He was Jewish too. These two photographers called themselves suppliers of the Royal Court, and were allowed to photograph the members of the royal family. They turned photography into an art. I have some pictures that were taken at 'Julietta'. Next to Mandy's was a famous tailor's shop owned by the Cohen brothers, suppliers of the Royal Court. They were Jews too, of course. After the war, they emigrated to Israel. It was a men's tailoring shop. I don't know if they also made women's clothes, but I believe they didn't. The Cohen brothers made you look like they wanted to - thinner, stouter; they were artists of their trade.