

Juliana Kann And Her Grandmother Fanni Kann



This is my paternal grandmother Fanni Kann with me. The picture was taken in Tartu in 1938, shortly before my grandmother's departure for France to her elder daughter Nata. I do not remember my grandmother. This is her only picture. I did not see her as she died in Paris during the Holocaust.

I do not know much about my grandmother Fanni Kann. I do not even remember her, though I have a picture where she is holding me in her arms. I cannot recall her maiden name. She was a pianist. She did not give concerts, but taught music. I knew a lot of Tartu Jews who were her students. Judging by their stories, she was a very good teacher. Grandfather practiced medicine. They had two children: daughter Nata and a son, my father-to-be, Alexander.

I do not know for sure what Father did in Tartu upon his graduation. Once, Mother mentioned casually that he owned a sawmill. At any rate, they stayed in Tartu for a little bit after Father had finished his studies. Of course, they planned on leaving for France, but postponed their trip. Maybe it was connected with the fact that Grandfather Julius was getting sick and Father was not willing to leave him. I do not know. Grandfather died in 1937, when my mother was pregnant. He was buried in Tartu Jewish cemetery. Crowds of people came to his funeral. He was loved and known in Tartu. Besides, many Tartu denizens were his patients. I was born on 20th June 1938 and named Juliana after my grandfather.

After I was born, Grandmother Fanni went to France to her daughter Nata. I do not know when it happened exactly. There is a picture dating back to 1938, when my grandmother was holding me in her hands. She probably could not have left later because in 1939 France was occupied by the Germans. She must have left in 1938. Mother wanted me to grow up a little bit as she did not want to take an overseas trip with an infant. They decided to go after I had turned one. When I reached that age, we could not leave as Europe was occupied by fascists.

Father's kin perished in France during the war. French people sheltered them, but Grandmother wanted to take a walk. Nobody wanted to let her out explaining that she should stay in as it was dangerous out there. She would not listen, went outside and vanished.