

## Henriette Mizrahy With Her Children



My mother, Henriette Mizrahy [nee Schonfeld], is in the center, with her children: me, Dan Mizrahy, on the left, and my sister, Mira Cotin [nee Mizrahy] on the right. The photograph was taken in 1933 in Bucharest.

From the moment I could understand and judge, I realized that the day of 29th March - my mother's birthday - was a holiday in our home. The house filled with flowers, the phone didn't cease to ring, and, in the evening, when all preparations had been finished, the family gathered together with some couples of friends who were as close to my parents as their brothers and sisters. As for the presents, they were my father's 'job'. I remember the 'bestowment' of such a gift. I think this was in 1936 or 1937. In my parents' bedroom, in front of me, my father presents my mother a nicely wrapped small package. She opens it and reveals a red-blue box of 'Shalimar' perfume. Delighted, my mother kisses my father and thanks him. He urges her to open the box and try the perfume. On doing that, my mother lifts the top that covered the bottle, which causes an object wrapped in paper to fall on the floor. We rush to pick it up, my mother unwraps it and we are all speechless! My mother is holding the most beautiful brooch that we have ever seen!

Our family's standard of living was the normal one for an intellectual who worked as a higher clerk and supported a wife and two children. We employed one or two maids, usually from Transylvania, and we also had a nurse for a while - until we were seven or eight. As far as our education is concerned, I can say that no resources were spared in order for us to get the best schools and the best teachers. There were no extravagances though! Our parents didn't take the taxi, and neither did we, obviously. I'm pushing the limits of my memory in order to be able to recall one single vacation spent with my father in the 1930s, but I fail.

When we were small children, my mother would first take us on vacation to the seaside, at the Black Sea, for a month, then to the mountains for another month - usually to Predeal or Timisul de Sus, mountain resorts in Brasov County. We stayed at the Excelsior boarding house, later known as Savoy.