

Wedding Of Ruzena Deutschova



This is a picture of my wedding day, taken in Prague in 1947. My aunt from Prague, Etus is holding my arm. On the other side, my husband Hermann Deutsch has taken my other arm. My father 's second wife, Sarika Schiffer is beside him, then comes my father. In the foreground is Nachman Tevlovits, my aunt's husband, and Jindricka, their little girl.

I met him[her husband] in the Jewish kitchen, where I was working as an assistant cook. He also went there to eat. We got to know each other at that time, even though he was from Galanta, too. There was a twenty-four year age difference between us. Before the war, he went around on a beautiful bicycle. I always wanted to borrow it, so I asked him, 'Mister, please loan me your bike!'. Of course, he never did. He was a bachelor.

My husband borrowed my wedding dress from an acquaintance of his. The veil and bouquet I got as a present. My aunt dressed me before the wedding. In that Prague synagogue, where there is a Jewish clock [Jewish Town Hall on Maiselova Street has a clock with Hebrew letters which moves counter-clockwise], that's where the wedding was. The orthodox rabbi Rappaport married us. The groom was waiting already under the chuppah. My Aunt Ethel and my father's wife, that is, my step-mother wrapped me in their arms and led me under the chuppah. My father and Uncle Nachman stood on either side of my husband.. At the end of the ceremony, my husband broke glasses. After the ceremony, we went to Aunt Etus's house, where a wedding banquet followed. Quite a lot of people came. My best girlfriend, Szidi was there with her husband. They set seven tables. After the wedding, I stayed in the Paris Hotel with my husband. We were in Prague for a week. In the beginning, I called my husband Hermann, but when the children were born, then he became 'Dad'. In front of the grandchildren, I called him 'Papa'.

The only sibling of my father's that I knew personally was Aunt Etus. Her husband was called Nachman Tevlovits. They lived in Prague. Directly before the war, they had a daughter, Jindricka. I never visited them before the war, so I can't say anything about them. They were taken away to the Theresienstadt concentration camp. They were lucky because my uncle was a very clever man, he wove baskets from willow branches, and chairs and baby carriages. The Germans spared his life

because of it, since they always needed something. He went down to the river to collect the willow branches. He set traps for the ravens, which my aunt made soup from. This is how the whole family escaped. They spent three or four years in the Theresienstadt concentration camp.

When they were liberated, Aunt Etus told me, they went back to Prague in a horse-drawn carriage. They lived in a family home on the outskirts. In 1947, I married in Prague, and the reception feast was held in their house. After the war, until I married, I often stayed at their house. My aunt really loved me, I even resembled her. When her daughter was born, Evike, I washed diapers for her, and cooked for them. I helped them a lot. In February of 1948, before the Communists took complete control in Czechoslovakia, they emigrated to America. My uncle also had a friend living there, who sent a letter of invitation [required for US visa] and ship's passage. Father went to say goodbye. They never saw each other again. Why they left, I don't know. Maybe, they would have locked up my uncle, for having a broom factory.

At first, they lived in America in New York, from there in Michigan, then they moved to Detroit, where they belonged to an orthodox religious community. Their only son was born in Detroit, Ervin, who got the Jewish name Jichak. Aunt Etus spoke Yiddish with her children. After the political changes [1989], I visited them once in Detroit. I met my Aunt, Jindricka and Jichak. We spoke in Yiddish because my aunt couldn't speak a word of Hungarian anymore. She only knew enough to write in Hungarian in her letters, 'csokol Etus' ['kisses Etus']. She could write that still. My aunt died at the age of ninety-three. She's buried in the Jewish cemetery in Detroit.

Jindricka remembered my wedding, and how she always asked her mother, 'Mami, kdy budu ja takova slezna jako Ruzenka?' [Mommy, when will I be a big girl like Rozika?] They called me Ruzenka in Prague. She remembered that. That made me very happy. When I was in America, Jindricka was about 64-65 years old. Jindricka was divorced from her husband, she has two families, both chose Jewish spouses. Today Jindricka is a retired teacher, her son is a pharmacist. Her daughter worked with computers, but she's also retired now. The children are not religious, anymore. The son still goes to temple, but he's not so religious. The girls [Jindricka and Evicka] don't go to temple anymore either. Jindricka's children live in Chicago, I didn't meet them. I saw one of the daughters and the son of my other cousin, Jichak. The girl was a university student. His other daughter was living in Caracas then, I didn't meet her.

Following the war, my father got married. Fina Messinger was the sadchen for Father and his new wife. Father's new bride-to-be, Sara Schiffer, lived in Pest with her siblings. She was from an orthodox Jewish family in Satoraljaújhely. Since one of her older brothers had taken a non-Jewish wife before the war, they expelled him from the family.

I don't even know where the wedding was held. I was with my father's sister at the time, with Etel in Prague. I lived for a time with Father's new family, up until I got married. I didn't like them at first, so I didn't call her Mother, but rather Aunt Sari. Later, my children also called her Aunt Sari and that was very painful for her. When my father died, my husband said, 'Sarika you are a guest at our house every Saturday.' She appreciated this very much and came every Saturday for lunch.

When I became a widow, I sometimes celebrated the holidays at Sarika's. We went to the Dohany Street synagogue. I went on foot from Angyal Street all the way to Dohany Street, not by streetcar.

Sarika died about ten years ago. She spent the last days of her life in the hospital, as she had cancer. Sarika's American niece and I were at her side. Sunday I had gone home to Galanta, but by that evening the telephone rang, Sarika was dead. That week I went back to Pest to one of my girlfriend's house and we arranged the burial. The Neolog community [Neolog Jewry] was based in Wesselenyi street. Rabbi Deutsch buried her, I paid him to recite the Kaddish for a year.