

## Andrei Popper



This is a photo of me taken in Arad in 1950.

I became a party member against my will. A friend of mine, Ladislau Lakatos, a druggist in Buteni, had gone to college in Bucharest before the war. There he joined a group of communist students and became a fervent Communist too, although he came from a family belonging to the Hungarian nobility. After 23rd August 1944, he joined the Party and signed me in too, without asking me about it. I took part in activities organized by the Communists and I had to attend weekly meetings. However, I didn't become a party member out of conviction, but because Ladislau and me were very good friends. He was a good chap, a true gentleman.

I knew other people who had been accepted in the Party despite their origin. There used to be a bank in Arad; it was called Goldschmidt and it was owned by a Jew. His son, much older than me, studied Economics in Paris before World War I. Back then, one couldn't study this in Romania, but only in Vienna or Paris. While in Paris, he joined a communist society and became a fervent Communist, although his father owned a bank. When the Communists came to power in Romania, he received a high office in a ministry and was even sent to Hungary as a diplomat, for he spoke Hungarian.

I never had any problems with the Communists. I only met very few of them who liked to cause trouble. The county's prime secretary of the Communist Party was the only one who had the right to check on me, but he never interfered with what I was doing. This was the order from Bucharest. My coworkers were nice people; as for the clerks I worked with, I was lucky because they did their jobs well. I also had Jewish coworkers: Livia Halmos, Maxim Goroneanu, Ladislau Samuel.