

At The Pokol Castle



We lived in Borsabanya for about eight months, and then we received the notification from Bucharest that we had to move on, they never asked us whether we wanted to or not. My husband Andras Gaspar, Andris, loved to get the works going. We moved to Borpatak, [today Valea Borcutului] ten kilometers from Nagybanya, and that was a beautiful village, as well. There was a gold-mine there. Andris was an engineer in the mine, he managed the works. We lived in the castle of the former owner of the mine, a Hungarian man called Pokol. (He flee abroad during the war, and never came back.) Allegedly on top of that building, up on the tower, there was a golden globe, made of massive gold. Nobody took that off. A relative of this Pokol once invited us to dinner [he related us these things]. Pokol was a very wealthy man, he owned the gold-mine, he built it, based on his own designs. He had a daughter called Rita, who had lung disease. Her profile was cut in the French doors of Mrs. Pokol's rooms. The left terrace of the house had glass walls all around for the girl to be able to sunbathe there because of here tuberculosis, and to have fresh air. They lived in witzerland.

There was an underground dwelling, and the apartments were upstairs. My family lived there, on the right, there were two large windows, giving onto the mountains. There were around ten families living in the castle. Each of them got one or two rooms, depending on the fact that the employee was alone or with the family. Everyone had a bathroom, kitchen, closet, everything they wanted. We liked it very much there. It was beautiful, a nice little apartment. If it was rearranged after Pokol went away, that is whether it was the same when he lived there, with this many kitchens, I don't know. In front of the castle it was a beautiful garden.

This picture was taken in 1951-1952, I know this because my daughter Veronika was this little bow-legged girl in the park. She is the one standing under the trees; she used to play in the park in front

of the building. I used to take there the washbowl and she used to take a bath there.

We didn't live there too much, only one winter and one spring. We stayed there less than a year, and my daughter got sick. So I had to go to Nagybanya, and there was no vehicle, except a cab, a drag Mr. Pokol used to travel around. The coachman was called Vasile, and it was the only means of going to Nagybanya. There was no coach service between Borpatak and Nagybanya, there was no railway there, either, and I thought if something happened to Vasile I wouldn't be able to go there. You never know what can happen to a small child, can you? It took us two hours to get to Nagybanya by carriage. The doctor [in Nagybanya] gave us the wrong medicine [for the treatment].

One time Andris came home, and told me: 'What do you think: should I enter the university in Kolozsvár?' I said yes. He graduated with the highest grades. When my sister-in-law heard about this: 'What?! He has a good pay! Why does he need a university degree? He has a decent job without university. You'll be so poor as a church mouse. It's expensive.' I told her: 'I will be the poor one, and Andris, not you.' He signed up for the correspondence courses of the mining faculty. But he received a notification from the center in Bucharest that stated that mining could not be studied through correspondence anymore, and he had to choose something else, and they were willing to enter him to any other department, he wouldn't have to take the admittance exams one more time. So now there was that big question mark, what faculty should he enter? I didn't interfere in his option, he decided to enter the department of mechanical engineering, and he was transferred to Bucharest. He went to Bucharest, signed up and came back. Well, Bucharest was very far away from Nagybanya.

And what happened then? Some people came from Bucharest, from the Ministry, to check how things were going, and they had lunch at our place, because there was no restaurant there. One of them asked us how is life there, and I told them I would go in my knees anywhere we could have medical assistance, because of the child. 'Where do you want to go?' I don't care, but anywhere we could find medical assistance. [One of them] promised me he would arrange for us to be transferred. I didn't really believe him, but in the end he did, and not just anywhere, to Gyulafehérvár. So we ended up in Gyulafehérvár. We stayed there for six years, until Andris graduated from university. We had no holidays, Andris had no vacation for six years, because he took his holiday during the examination period, because back then there was no vacation for studies. Anyway, those were hard times. But the professors were very nice. He sent them the works and they sent them back to him corrected. And he had to take the exams once a year. If he had to retake any exams in the fall, he had to take them once again.