

Laszlo Galla



This is me, Laszlo Gunst, as a seven-year-old in 1924. I don't know what occasion this picture was taken for. It was taken in Szentes. It was a bit of a special occasion to go to the photographer's. A few people in our family already had a camera then, so it wasn't a world-shaking event. I've got a sailor suit on, and that was elegant in those days. I really hated that I had to grow my hair so long, because they teased me for it: long hair, short of brains. This was my mother's mania, but I later realized, that I somehow look like my little older sister, who died before I was born, and my mother probably saw some kind of replacement for her in me. I should have been a girl. I can't think of any other reason, because the other boys didn't have hair like that.

I didn't go to nursery school, I was raised at home. There was a Jewish elementary school in Szentes, I went there for four years. The elementary school was four grades, and all four grades were taught in one room, there were so few children, there were about 30 students all together. The curriculum was the same as in the other schools. I know this because we could take part in city study competitions, and the good pupils of the Jewish school always did well.

We lived with my grandparents. The house was in the same building as the shop, a corner building. The shop and the warehouses were in the corner part of it, and the five-bedroom apartment was on the Petofi Street side. My grandparents brought up one of my cousins, my Aunt Regina's youngest child, and one of the five rooms was his, my parents had three rooms and my grandparents had a huge room right beside the shop. We lived like the bourgeois, I would say. We had nice furniture and paintings on the wall. The paintings and the furniture all disappeared in 1944. I remember that we had paintings by Jozsef Koszta. I got my own room when Gyuri left home at the age of 19-20. He eventually became a doctor, and because of the numerus clausus he was only able to finish his training in Italy. Until that time I didn't have my own room, I slept in one room with my parents.