

Sidonia Illes With Relatives



This photo was taken in Israel, in Gaza, in 1978, when I first went there. The woman first from right is my aunt, Olga Jakobovics - she always liked to dress very elegantly - , next to her you can see me, and the woman next to me is Cipora, the daughter of my cousin, Joshua Tetzler, who lives in Gaza. The three children are hers. The first time I went to Israel was in 1978. I went there again in 1980. Back then, they would let you go, provided someone from there had sent you 100 dollars and an invitation. I have many friends in Israel. They come from all the regions of Romania and live in different parts of Israel. They are all Jews in Israel, but they are called after the country of origin, like Romanian Jews, for instance. My cousin in Israel, Joshua Tetzler, who's nicknamed Siu, now lives in Gaza, with all his family: his wife Ester; his daughters, Rachela, with her husband and children, and Cipora. Rachela and her husband have even more children now; with religious Jews, abortion is forbidden. And there's something else: the ones living in Israel must have many children, for the Arabs are numerous. Everyone must have at least three children. I went to many places when I was in Israel; Aunt Olga took me to all the museums. There's the Yad Vashem there, the Holocaust memorial for all nations. What particularly moved me was a memorial of the children who died in the Holocaust. I went inside, the lights went out, and it was as if I were watching the sky; then a voice called out the children's names, where they came from and how old they were. This only took a few minutes, but it was very impressive. Those names were called out in English, German and in other languages too. I haven't heard from my cousin, Joshua, and his family in Jerusalem recently. News travel slowly. Not long ago, they called me on the phone and were glad to see I was still here. I am always frightened when I hear about those terrorist acts there and I always wonder whether they made it alive or not.