MY LIFE

A Personal History in Eventful Times

By Henry Tausk

"Deep is the well of the past"

Thomas Mann, *Joseph and his brethren*

FOREWORD

The subtitle of my recollections evoked in my mind two quotations from the past. One is the old Chinese curse: "You should live in interesting times" and the other is a citation from Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire". He postulates: "The happiest times in the lives of people were those about which no history was written".

The Chinese curse overshadowed my life and that of my immediate family. We lived in Eastern Europe, that all along its history, as well as in the twentieth century too, was the scene of major political and geographical upheavals. My parents were born around the turn of the 19th to the 20th century, in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. This was created in 1867, as a consequence of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848-49, and the defeat of it. The ruler, Franz Joseph of the Habsburg House, was the emperor of Austria and became crowned as the king of Hungary. This double monarchy, an odd entity, had common governmental organization for external affairs, finances and army; all the other governmental services were separate for the two partners, who were supposed to be equal in everything. A major complicating factor was that the monarchy had large Slavic minorities (Czechs, Slovaks, Croatians, Slovenes, Ukrainians, Serbs), as well as Romanians, etc. who by the turn of the century were in the grips of a more or less intense nationalistic fervor. A major part of the monarchy was sandwiched in-between the German speaking central authority and the huge Russian empire on the East, that was actively fanning the Slav national feelings. Other small national minorities were also within the boundaries of the monarchy.

The heir to both thrones, the archduke Franz Ferdinand, was hated by the emperor because of his marriage to a woman of the minor nobility. The heir hoped that after his uncle, the emperor, will die, he will be able to transform the double monarchy, into a confederation of states established by the component nationalities. Therefore, the archduke was hated by the Hungarians who were to lose their prominence in the new

“Danube-monarchy”, as well as by all the other component nationalities who wanted independence, and not further existence under Austrian rule. The killing of the archduke in June 1914 (by a Serbian national), became the apparent reason and the kick-off of the First World War.

For my family, all of the above was complicated by the fact that we were Jewish. Despite the fact that by the second half of the 19th century, Jews in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy were accepted citizens and emancipated fast and freely, anti-Semitism was still intense. In the years 1882-83, the old blood-libel was revived in Hungary: a Christian girl (Eszter Solymos) was supposedly killed by Jews in the village of Tisza-Eszlar, in order to have her blood used in fabrication of Passover Matza. The accusation and the judicial proceedings produced in Hungary an upheaval similar to the Dreyfuss affair in France. The affair apparently ended after Kàroly Eötvös, a lawyer, writer and MP managed to get the accused Jews acquitted. However, there were major anti-Semitic incidents and fear of pogroms in Budapest and many other Hungarian cities.

Romania, like the Russian empire, was a hotbed of hatred towards the Jews. In the year 1905, widespread pogroms broke out in Russia, that contributed to the major immigration of Jews to the United States, and to Zionist settlements in the Holy Land, at that time under Turkish occupation. The creation of a new city next to Jaffa in the year 1909, named Tel Aviv, was one of the consequences of that exodus from Russia. Romania at that time, was still one of the three states of Europe (next to Russia and Turkey), where Jews had no civil rights, and had to carry an internal passport-like document.

Eastern Europe is definitely an area to which Gibbons’ postulate applies. Located in-between three empires (German, Russian and Turkish) it was not able to coalesce into national states like Western Europe. In all of modern history, there were constant kaleidoscopic changes in the political configuration of the component parts. Small national groups lived occasionally, for a short time independently, but for most of the time they were either fighting among themselves, or were subjugated by one or the other super-power. They did generate lots of history.

The treaty of Versailles, that put an end to World War 1, saw the creation of a modern, united “Great Romania”, a constitutional monarchy, where all citizens, even the Jewish ones, were supposed to have equal rights. Nevertheless, anti-Semitism persisted and was even officially accepted and condoned.

I was born barely a decade after the creation of the new, “Great Kingdom” of Romania, and raised in those years, when Romanian nationalism was burning with a bright flame. From the start I and my immediate family we were a foreign body, both as nationals and in the usage of language. My native city, Arad, was previously never part of Romania. The citizens who in my time were Romanian nationals had until 1919 always lived under Hungarian rule, they had learned in Hungarian schools, served in the Hungarian armies and spoke fluent Hungarian. The Jewish middle class, to which my parents and grandparents belonged were either ardent Hungarian patriots, or felt that they

belonged to the Austro-Hungarian empire and were at home in both Hungarian and German languages. Additionally, we were Jewish.

The first fifteen years of my life witnessed the emergence of a Romanian government that was fascist and subservient to Nazi Germany. The next seventeen years brought the establishing of a communist regime and servitude to the Russian Soviet. Me and my family, we were both considered disposable elements and even enemies of these regimes: first because of our ethnicity (being Hungarian speaking Jews) and second because of our social origin (being capitalists and middle-class). Both regimes did the utmost to destroy us as individuals, as a group and a class, and we were lucky that we survived and managed to stay alive.

Many years back I read a poem by the Hungarian poet Görgy Faludy, entitled "The Ballad of Charlie Zero", that had impressed me profoundly. It recalls an evening of the retired citizen Charlie Zero, who decides to write his autobiography. He sits down to his desk, with a big stack of white paper. The first chapters were to deal with childhood and school, but as he tries to think back, there is nothing to write about. The years of growing up and studying, are also times when nothing noteworthy has happened to him. Getting married, settling in a job, having children, all these are routine events, there is no outstanding or dramatic happening that would warrant mentioning. Next Charlie contemplates adult life, retirement, old age, etc. etc. When dawn arrives, Charlie Zero is found dead, slumping on a heap of white paper, and only the first page displays the proud title in large letters: "My life". I have transplanted this poem in English and occasionally proffered it to friends. This poem and its implications have haunted me over the years, and were the reason that I have started to make notations of certain periods of my life. After having retired from active hospital work, these essays coalesced into a continuous narrative, somehow partitioned according to history and time periods. It filled me with great satisfaction that I seemed to be able to give an account of my person and the family's activities in those variegated times I have lived in. I was lucky in that mother, grandmother, a great-aunt as well as great-grand-mother all have put to paper recollections of their times and lives. They did write in Hungarian and German, and I duly translated most of it into English. It is not a literary work, but it is intended mostly for the next generations. I don't have children but Ed's children (Gene and Madeleine) as well as his grandchildren (or maybe even the following generations) may be interested in their roots and family histories. By the time young people are becoming interested in the past, there is usually nobody left from whom one should receive information. These pages may help fill that void.

My Hometown Arad

Arad, the city I was born in, on February the 18th, 1929, lies at the edge of the great Hungarian plain. It is on the eastbound margin of that fertile Pannonic basin that extends from the Carpathian Mountains to the Austrian Alps and is delimited to the North by the Tatra Mountains and to the South by the western fringes of the Balkan Mountains. Looking eastwards from Arad, one can see the low hills of the wine country, which will rise farther east to a gold-rich mountain range, dividing Transylvania (the area craddled within the crook of the Carpathian Mountain range) from the Hungarian "Puszta". The river Maros (called Mures by the Romanians who presently rule the country) which runs east-to-west from the heartland of southern Transylvania, describes an almost complete loop at Arad, with the city located on the northern shore of that peninsula. A short distance westward, the Maros will flow into the Tisza and their joined waters will end up in the majestic Danube. The area is in the midst of Eastern Europe, at least from the geographical point of view. Political definitions are far more difficult to pinpoint. Count Metternich once said that whatever is east of Vienna is in fact Asia, while the Hungarians always considered their homeland to be a bulwark of the civilized West, facing the wild, barbaric East. The writer George Mikes (a Hungarian transplanted into England) defined the area as Central Europe - and his designation recognizes that it has very little to do with geography; it is rooted in background, education, culture and mostly in state of mind. Becoming part of the Romanian kingdom after the first World War, definitively contributed to the Balkanization of the area.

Arad County 2020

The vicinity of Arad is a rich agricultural domain, probably settled as far back in known history as the first attempts to cultivate grain. The name of the city - Arad (or perhaps Orod) - appears repeatedly in Hungarian history. The first important reference dates back to the 12th century, when Arad was the locale of a National Assembly under the king Béla the II-d, the Blind one. That assemblage may have been the unsuccessful predecessor to the "Golden Bulla", which enunciated the rights of the people, exalting the will of the nobility against the monarch. It was proclaimed in 1222, only 7 years after the Magna Charta was originated in England.

From the 16th century on, the area was under Turkish rule, and the hamlet of Arad was overshadowed by the far more important fortress of Lipova, the seat of the Turkish pasha. At the end of the 17th century the Austrian armies drove out the Turks, and a small fortress was set up in Arad, which became a border fortification - the area south of the Maros continued for a while to be ruled by the Ottomans. By the end of the 18th century the township had almost 8000 inhabitants, and the first Jewish settlers were - grudgingly - admitted. In 1834 the township became a "Free Royal City" and from than on development was fast.

The next important event that took place in the neighborhood of Arad was the capitulation of the rebellious Hungarian army in 1849. It marked the defeat of the insurrection against the Austrian Empire, and the Russian Tsar had to lend a hand to his "brother", the young Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph, in order to defeat the mutinous Magyars. The main reason for this unlike collaboration was the fact, that the Hungarians had not only risen against their God-appointed ruler, but they had proclaimed a republic as their form of government. This had set a dangerous and intolerable specter of precedents in Eastern Europe. The capitulation of the rebels took place at Világos, a wine-producing village in the vicinity of Arad. Világos was renamed Siria under the Romanian rule, and we often made day-trips to the ruins of the fortress on a hilltop, as well as to a family friend's vineyard on the slopes.

After capitulating to the Russian army, the leaders of the rebellion were extradited to the Austrian authorities, notwithstanding the previously laid out agreements. Those leaders who had earlier served in the Austrian army, were court-martialed and summarily hanged in the courtyard of the fortress of Arad, on October the 6th, 1849. The fact that one of them, the count Leiningen was a distant cousin of Queen Victoria, did not do any good to him. The memory of these 13 martyrs remained for a long time a rallying cry for Hungarian nationalists. Streets were named after those heroes and a granite monument was erected at the site. In my childhood we occasionally picnicked in that grove in the back of the fortress, on October 6. With the passage of time, while I was growing, Romanian nationalism intensified and people were reluctant to identify themselves with such an exhibit of Hungarian emotion. I forgot completely about the site, until I saw on a 1976 map of Arad a mention of the memorial to the 13 martyrs, erected in remembrance of the commanders of the revolutionary troops of 1848, who were executed on orders from the Hapsburg authorities. This positive reference is the more astounding, because Avram Jancu, a Romanian peasant leader, was fighting in 1848 on the side of the imperial forces, against the rebellious Magyars. The main square of the city was, and is still named after him.

The Monument of the 13 Martyrs of Arad, killed in 1848

At the end of World War I, Arad became part of the enlarged Romanian kingdom. This produced deep-felt bitterness in the Hungarian people. After the defeat of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, those people hoped that Wilson's principles of self-determination will keep Arad integrated in the new, diminished Hungary. It did not happen so, because Romania was on the winner's side, and requested as a reward the entire Transylvania. Hungarians claimed Arad to be a pure Hungarian city, and until recently I have never doubted the validity of that assertion. Lately it occurred to me that Arad was the seat of a Greek-orthodox bishopric, with a Cathedral built in the second half of the last century, while still under Hungarian rule. Furthermore, a significant segment of the population belonged to the Greek-Catholic creed, and as such must have been by definition Romanians. The first village to the east of Arad, Mindruloc, was for sure a Romanian settlement. Romanians also made up a significant portion of the population in other communities. Furthermore, villages close to Arad were inhabited by many other than Hungarian nationalities too: New-Arad was almost completely German, Vinga was mostly Bulgarian (it was a center of vegetable-gardening), Ortisoara and Mertisoara had a populace of Walloon descent (settled there under the Empress Maria Theresa). So, in retrospect, it seems to me that the "pure Hungarian" character of Arad must have been a fiction, propagated mostly to support the Hungarian national sentiment.

Be it as it may, the truth was that during my childhood, Hungarian was spoken widely in Arad, and the streets were known mostly by their old Hungarian names. There was a Hungarian language high school, called the Catholic Lyceum, probably because it was run by the Church. The language I am still speaking is old fashioned, unadulterated Hungarian, and I learned it at home and on the streets of Arad.

In my childhood, in the 1930s, Arad may have had a population of about 80 thousand. There was some industry, mills, a big textile factory and a major plant for building and repairing railway wagons. Agriculture and business related to it was one of the major constituents of the economic life.

Arad was a railway hub: a primary east-west line intersected an important north-south line. There was a direct link from Bucharest, the capital of Romania, running through southern Transylvania along the river Maros to our city and the express train took

about 10 hours for that trip. From Arad one could continue westward, for the about one-hour train ride to Curtici (Kürtös), the major frontier-crossing to Hungary. To the north one could travel by express train in less than 2 hours to Oradea-Mare (Nagyvárad), and continue for another 3 and 1/2 hours to Cluj (Kolozsvár). Both cities were centers of Hungarian cultural life. To the South it was less than one hour by express train to Timisoara (Temesvár), a multilingual (German, Romanian, Hungarian, with bits of Serbian) cultural and economic center.

Arad, The City Hall

There were no features of outstanding urbanistic architecture displayed in my hometown. In Hungarian language the expression for such an urban agglomeration was "city of the plains", indicating the agricultural roots and foundations. From the railroad station a long (perhaps a mile and a half) and broad boulevard stretched to the city hall, and from there another two blocks further south to the square building of the theater, straddling the main street. Behind the theater there was a large plaza and that was already the end of the city center. The City Hall, built under the reign of mayor Salacz towards the end of the 19-th century, was a yellow, one-story high structure. It was a quadrangular building with an inner courtyard. There was a plaza with some lawn and flower-beds in front of it and a tall clock-tower. At the time of the erection of the tower, the facade of the clock fronting east was blank: that was the direction of the fortress, and the City Council was miffed with the use of the fortress as barracks for a regiment. They may have felt that denying to the military information on the exact time, is a subtle and strong statement of displeasure. There was a story about how years later a child was run over by a carriage: she was running from the park in the back of the city hall, to its side in order to look at the clock. Maybe this story is fictional, at any rate shortly before World War I, a fourth face was installed on the clock, and citizens customarily adjusted their watches to it.

In the back of the city hall there was a large park, with a twin park farther south. In-between the parks stood the imposing Cultural Palace, built in the years just before the First World War. It had a pyramidal gray cupola, a grand staircase flanked by two turreted spiral stairs and mixed features of Renaissance and Romanesque architectural styles. The large hall was used often for concerts, and it is proudly chronicled that Béla Bartok, Richard Strauss, Huberman, George Enescu and many others had on occasion displayed their talents there. In his memoirs Leo Schlezak, the famous Austrian tenor, emphasized that it was one of the best concert halls he ever sang in. The palace housed the local museum, a library and in the basement, there was an elementary school which in due time became my first alma mater.

Opposite the City Hall there was a one-story nondescript corner-building, housing the Police headquarters. The building next to it was more prominent: the home of the "Csanádi" Bank, with a large “fer forge” portal, flanked by impressive marble (?) columns and a sculptured tympanum. It housed amongst other commercial spaces the carpet business of the Domán family, and the best pastryshop in town "Málka". In the courtyard there was the "A.T.E." a sport club. In summer the enclosure was used for tennis, in winter it became a skating rink. In the evenings it was illuminated, and there was a cozy and pleasant warm-up house. While we tried our prowess on ice, Wiener waltzes were played over the old-fashioned megaphones, and the real skaters were dancing on the ice.

Of the many churches of the city, the most impressive was the pseudo-Renaissance Catholic cathedral of the Minorite brothers. It was located on the west side of the main boulevard, close to the theater. It had a cupola, and wide stairs leading to the entrance hidden behind a row of classic columns. Above the columns golden letters displayed in Hungarian language that: "My house is the house of prayers". On the ledge below that text, pigeons were roosting, and the majestic steps were constantly littered with their droppings.

The theater, erected in 1894, was housed in a big square block, positioned like a plug to occlude the main boulevard. Its general aspect was like that of an apartment building, with a restaurant and its terrace facing to the North the main boulevard. The front of the theater, with the entrances and the foyer was facing west.

Neologue Synagogue in Arad

There was a large Lutheran church, slightly to the north of city hall, built at the beginning of the 20th century, in neo-Gothic style. It was called the "red church" on behalf of its brick walls. The Baroque Greek Orthodox Cathedral, stood on one of the secondary plazas, where a daily market existed in my childhood. Other churches of different denominations were sprinkled all over the city. There were two synagogues. The orthodox one was a relatively small one, close to the big complex of the Jewish elementary school; it was located in the area where a Jewish Quarter used to be. Close to it on the Fish Square was the "neologue" synagogue. It was in the courtyard of a large building, all erected in 1834, with the purpose to house not only the synagogue, but also other communal institutions. There is a story about how the building was erected The gentile city fathers constantly denied permission for the construction and finally the rabbi had an idea: he traveled to Vienna, obtained an audience with the emperor and offered the synagogue as a gift to the emperor. The emperor accepted, and the city council could not any more deny a building permit. The "neologue" congregation was a form of Jewish community existing mostly in Central Europe. It consisted of people emancipated from the strict conservative tradition, it emerged first in Hamburg, and was introduced to Arad in the middle of the last century. One of the proponents of the modernization of Jewish life in the last century was the chief rabbi of Arad, Aaron Chorin, who fought lasting battles with the conservatives inside and outside his congregation. The neologues were called also "occidental rites" and may be considered similar to the present-day conservatives: they were clad like ordinary citizen, wore no skullcaps, most of them did not pray with "Tefillin", they were quite relaxed in observing the laws of "kashrut" and the Sabbath, or they did not observe them at all. Inside the synagogue the men wore hats, hatted women were separated on the balcony but not hidden from view, the services were held in Hebrew with the sermon in the national language, there was an organ, a choir, and customarily the cantor had the manners of an operatic tenor. In the first decades of the

20th century Zionism was often an important tenet. The rabbis themselves were usually graduates of the theological seminary in Budapest, well-educated men, often sporting doctorates in philosophy, philology, history, etc.

In Arad most of the major public buildings were erected during the last half of the 19th century and the first fifteen years of the 20th. In my childhood the new Romanian regime had barely marked its presence architecturally: among the few exceptions was the building of the new telephone exchange center in the middle of the 1930-s.

The main market was behind the theater on the large plaza with a big monument to freedom (it was never spelled out what kind of freedom it was and for whom). In the last decade of communist rule, that obelisk was replaced with a monument in the memory of the Romanian soldiers who died while liberating Transylvania from fascism. I never knew anything about Romanians fighting against fascism, but monuments can be erected to any fictional saga. Presently that monument may have been replaced with any other memorial - stones do not blush bashfully when lies are engraved on them.

The market was at a short walking distance from our home. Mother did the shopping either alone or accompanied by the cook. I loved to go too, even volunteered to carry the shopping basket if it was not heavily loaded. The market was neat, every produce had its own area and the competing sellers laid out their wares either on wooden stalls or on homespun towels on the blacktop ground. The best milk products were sold by the "Schwab" (German) women from the neighboring villages. Thick sweet or sour cream was measured out in one or 2 deciliter (3.5 - 7 ounces) tin cups, yellowish white butter (called tea-butter) was presented in small slabs on green vine-leaves, and clumps of farmer cheese were heaped on larger leaves. We never bought milk on the market; it was delivered daily by the milkmen who drove their carriages from house to house. The vegetables and fruit were available according to the season, and even butchers had their stalls. We never bought meat on the market, only an occasional live goose or pair of chicken. The vendors had their customary locations, and had to pay a small fee for the site. Additional market plazas existed on other sites in the city and there were also the seasonal markets, usually four time a year. These fairs were major undertakings, all kinds of entertainment were added for those interested and more often than not, even the Medrano Circus was at hand for a week or so. The fall fair was the occasion to buy the winter apples, potatoes, onions, cabbage for the sauerkraut barrel, carrots, etc. For us children the added attractions were the vendors of gingerbread and other sweetmeats.

The Neumann Palace

Arad was a city sprawling out horizontally. The tallest structure was a three stories high apartment building. Due to this and to the fact that there was an elevator within, it was called the "Bohus" (this was the name of the owners - a long-established gentile family) palace. Most "tall" buildings had only two stories, and there were not too many of those either. The Neumann palace on the main street, got its name not because its height (only two stories), but because it was large and had two main entrances. At the time of my debut in the world, my parents had a rental flat there and as such I was born in a "palace". I was told that later the police headquarters moved into that building.

Amongst the few interesting structures, mention should be made of the "house with the lock". It was an old building, beyond the marketplace, displaying in a niche a tree-trunk covered with metal-plate and protruding nail heads, secured with a huge rusty lock. According to local lore, in the old days, every wandering rookie, arriving into town for apprenticeship in the smith's guild, had to strike a nail into the trunk. Close to our home there was a Baroque chapel, St. Florian's, built in the middle of the 18th century. Nearby was the Baroque statue of St. Nepomuk, the oldest monument in town, built in the year 1729.

The main boulevard connecting the city hall to the theater was wide, in fact there were three parallel streets divided by two narrow stripes of greenery in-between. This resulted in the two lateral lanes being unidirectional, and the middle lane, paved with yellow flagstones being used mostly for commercial traffic (mainly horse-drawn carriages). During the warm season the green stripes were endowed with seats made of metallic frames with wooden planks, all painted in white. In order to sit undisturbed during the afternoon and evening hours, as well as on Sundays, on had to pay a small fee to an uniformed park ranger, who kept walking along the stretch of the two blocks. Such

a "ticket" may have cost just pennies, but the mere fact that you paid for the seat, made it exclusive. It was chic to sit there and watch the people walking along the main boulevard. The fashionable western side was called the "Corso" and it was a magnet for the trendy set. Dandies and their young ladies were walking up and down on sunny Sunday noon hours, or in the late fair-weather afternoons. Introductions were made, acquaintances renewed, intrigues woven, gossip exchanged and friendships cemented. We children tried to ape our elders and crowded the "Corso".

Along the two blocks of the western side of this main boulevard one could find the most important and fashionable businesses. The Szentgyörgyi textile mart was close to its northern end. Close-by were two exclusive and expensive pastry-shops, where the fashionable people sat for a "torte", coffee or ice-cream in season. One of the premier buildings was called after its former owner: the Fischer Eliz palace. She bequeathed it in her will to the Jewish community with the purpose to set up an orphanage for girls. Further south there was the major bookstore, Kerpel Isidor's (his name in the Hungarian version was "Izso") emporium. It was a treasure trove of all printed things, as well as writing materials and musical stuff. Scores, recordings, musical instruments and all accessories could be purchased and ordered. In the back, there was a huge private lending library, from where one could take home any book (and the catalogue was multilingual and quite comprehensive) for a modest fee. If I close my eyes I could almost feel the familiar smell of the books, bound in tan wrapping paper, and could almost hear the voice of miss Ilonka, the small, light brown-haired, sharp-featured lady who was the chief employee of the lending-library. Miss Paula was sitting in the cashier's box just before the exit door. Mera Paula was a soft-faced, well-rounded, middle-aged blonde, who was far sharper than the mild look from behind her gold-rimmed spectacles. It was rumored that she is the mistress of old man Izso, and when during the war, Jews were not allowed to own any business, she became the nominal owner of the store. After the war, with Kerpel dead, she seemingly inherited everything and managed the business skillfully until the communist takeover.

The southern segment of the Corso, contained among others two major stores: the big porcelain and glass department store owned by the Szabo family, with Miklos Szabo and his family living above the store. Next to it was the big toy emporium of the Hegedüs family. I could have stayed glued to those display windows for hours, had I not been prodded to move on by the adult I was with. Smaller businesses were the Manea haberdashery, the textile store of Mr. Kabos (father of a classmate of mine), the toiletry store of Vojtek & Weiss, owned by Mr. Ordelt, the Meinl coffee store, etc. My interest in those was heightened by the fact that the last two ones were located in the building of the bank managed by Father. As such I almost had proprietary feelings toward their wares, and it is more than possible that the kindness of the owners was influenced by this relationship. The Cook travel agency located further south in the building of the Catholic Cathedral, was managed by "uncle" Künstler, related to us in a complex and oblique manner.

The opposite, east side of the main street was less fashionable for strolling. The northern block was taken by up by two massive white buildings, housing the administrative facilities of the county offices. The garden in-between was a nice park, presently occupied by a new hotel. The block to the South was occupied with commercial settings: on the corner was the textile store managed by the father of my classmate Maxi. Furthermore, prominent in my memory is the Dacia restaurant, with its dark and cavernous back-rooms where pool and chess were played. Next to it was the jute and sackcloth store of "uncle" Armin with the store sign A.S.A. (standing for Armin Schwartz Arad). His own private rowboat at the club proudly bore the same name on its prow. Nearby was the ironware and tool emporium of the Andrényi's. Successful gentile entrepreneurs, they received the baron title around the turn of the century, and although Hungarian nobility titles were not acknowledged by the Romanian authorities, everybody in town knew the owner as baron Andrényi. Of his two children the elder was one year my senior, the other one three years younger than me. I knew them from the rowing club and feared the older one - a brusque, curt lad, physically far stronger than me. He was a mediocre student, was persecuted under communism, and when he finally managed to go abroad, he settled in Germany as a driver. Another baronial family were the Jewish Neumanns. They got their title at the end of the last century, with a title of nobility "de Végvár". The Neumann baronial family were the richest people in Arad, owners of a mill, a spirit and yeast factory, as well as the big textile plant. Baron Feri, who may have been in his thirties in my childhood, was a bachelor, and he was linked by gossip to a number of ladies. The family gave a lot to Jewish charities and baron Feri was a patron of the local soccer team. Apparently, they had money on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean too: when the communist take-over was imminent in 1948, baron Feri escaped to the West and presumably joined the money and the family in America. In the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, amongst the benefactors one can find the name of Neuman de Végvár.


Francisc (Feri) Neumann

Beyond the main street, the second parallel street toward the river was flanked by the aforementioned park, just south of the Cultural palace. The street was called

Boulevard Drãgãlina, after some valiant Romanian general, but could have been called as well the Boulevard of Education. At the northern end, facing the Cultural palace, the City Hall and the county office building was the stately pale-yellow structure of the High School of Commerce. Farther south, just opposite to one of the main entrances to the park was the Ghiba Birta Lyceum, the high school for girls. At the southern end of the boulevard, near the ascent to the fortress bridge, stood the imposing building of the Moise Nicoara, the high school for boys. Majestic steps were leading to the big entrance door, which used to be off limits to the pupils. While I was enrolled at that school, we had to use the side entrance. Further down to the South were the far less lofty edifice of the technical high school and the teacher's seminary.

The elegant manor of the National Bank was located on the short street connecting the main boulevard with the "education" street. Close-by the new Telephone Exchange was installed in 1935, in a modern yellow building, ushering in the new era of the automatic phone. Instead of desperately turning the crankshaft and repeatedly and impatiently yelling to catch the attention of the phone operator, one had to select the four numbers on the rotating dial and talk to the party. Long distance calls were still made with the assistance of the operator, and our phone number, 26-67 became indelibly etched in my memory.

The restaurant located in the theater building facing North had a terrace, toward the main boulevard. On warm days people used to sit there for hours with a coffee, a drink and the newspapers. On both sides of the theater the streets were the southward continuation of the main boulevard, and they were busy commercial thoroughfares. On one of the corners stood the White Cross Hotel, the only good hostelry in town. In the old days the ballroom of the hotel was used for musical events, and the names of Franz Liszt, Johannes Brahms and Johann Strauss occasionally showed up on the program. Behind the theater was the Liberty Square (called Avram Jancu Square under the Romanian rule), where the previously mentioned market was located. The southeast corner of the theater building was home to the Moskovitz tailor shop: his two sons, Fritzi and Ernstie were classmates and pals of my brother Ed and myself.

Two blocks northwest from city hall was another plaza occasionally used for markets, flanked by the big Municipal Hospital. This institution was never used by middle-class people. If any of my parents' acquaintances or friends was sick, and the family physician believed that hospitalization is necessary, the patient was admitted to a private sanitarium. One of such establishments was the "Therapia", owned and managed by a friend of my parents Dr. Béla Windholz. He was an ob-gyn. specialist, and thus the facility had an operating room, kept busy by him and other private surgeons in Arad. If the medical problem was deemed to be serious or even life-threatening, every effort was made to get the patient to a Budapest clinic, less than 5 hours by train. Close to the general hospital there was a Children's Hospital and an Infectious Diseases Hospital. All of these institutions served mostly the indigent or people who had coverage by one of the major health care plans: a factory, a government agency, a union of white-collar employees, etc.

Public transportation consisted of a number of buses running mostly along the north-south axis of the town, from the train station towards the other end. The loop of the river Maros set a natural limit to the expansion of the city towards the East. Beyond the big marketplace, the main boulevard continued as a wide street with a southeast curvature to a bridge over the Maros into the neighboring township of New-Arad (about a mile from the marketplace). Other bus-lines fanned out into the suburbs, mostly to the North and the West. During the war there was talk about developing a tram line. Jewish men, who were called up for forced labor, worked on the grading, prepared the tracks and suddenly, towards the end of 1942, electrical tram-cars were running from the railway station to the marketplace. The tracks were laid out in the middle lane of the broad boulevard, and we had great fun in riding the new toy. Soon the rumor emerged, that the rolling stock has been lifted and taken as war booty from Odessa, and if my memory serves me properly, the Romanian State had to pay dearly for this theft at the end of the war.

As far as I can recall, during my childhood years there were no taxicabs on the streets of Arad. The transportation conveyance used by middle-class people was the horse-drawn carriage called "fiakker". The driver was sitting high on the coach-box and behind him was the cab: a large and comfortable seat for two, facing ahead, and opposite a narrow ledge-like low bench, almost under the back of the cabby. A retractable awning was protecting the main seat from rain and sun, but the cabby himself was exposed to the elements. On both sides of the coach-box there were the glass enclosed lamps where candles burned at night, and a hurricane lamp was hung on the undercarriage, to warn the other vehicles. A fiakker was pulled by one horse, usually an old nag, its best speed a slow trot, and even that one provoked only by constant prodding with the whip. The carriages available around Central Park for tourists in New York, are luxurious transports

compared to the fiakkers of my childhood. The horses pulling them are splendid equines, and if a contemporary citizen of New York were to see the whipping my childhood carriage horses had to endure, he for sure would have had the cabby hauled to court for cruelty against animals. In wintertime the snow-covered streets brought out the sleds. The same horses were pulling the smoothly gliding sleds, wherein passengers sat on thick layers of straw, all bundled up in warm coverlets. The bells were tinkling and we considered a sleight-ride to be the pinnacle of winter-fun.

There were occasional private cars in the streets, and I remember the thrill whenever I joined with my parents for a ride in "Uncle" Lipi's car. In my early childhood it was one of those antiquated contraptions, open (with a retractable cover) and riding on big yellow-spoke wheels. The horn was a black rubber bulb with a yellow copper funnel, and in order to honk you had to squeeze the bulb. In later years uncle Lipi purchased an Opel Olympia, dark-blue in color, sleek and elegant but far less romantic.

Merchandise and goods were transported mostly on horse-drawn platforms, large open carriages, occasionally covered cubicles with the owner's trade and name painted on the sides. These horses were usually in far better shape than the fiakker-horses, golden, powerful and heavyset animals called Mecklenburger's. Street urchins had lots of fun when they hopped on the end of the platform for a free ride. We middle-class children tried to emulate this feat, and everybody had to jump off fast when the coachman realized that he is carrying freeloaders. Lashing back with his whip, he seldom managed to hit any of us, because after the first exposure to the sting of the leather tongue of the whip, our vigilance became extreme.

Bicycle-riding was frequently a means of personal transportation for younger people. Motorcycles were quite rare and were considered a sporty extravaganza. There were no traffic lights, and occasionally a brown-uniformed policeman stood in the middle of a busy intersection, waving his arms to direct the "flow" of the traffic. I do not think those fiakker-rides were expensive. My parents were living reasonably, avoiding unnecessary expenses, and still on a real hot summer noon, we often rode home from the beach in a fiakker (it was less than half an hour walk). Father had no qualms engaging a fiakker when coming home from the office in bad weather, and the same was true when my parents went out in the evening or drove to the railway station for a trip.

The loop of the river Maros was an important feature of the city. There must have been flooding in the distant past, because there was a protecting embankment all along the river front. It may have been perhaps seven feet high, and it was an effective shield. I have recollections of a high tide in my childhood, when the Mikelaka borough, unprotected by the dam, was flooded. The land between the dike and the river was only about 30 feet wide at the center of the loop, and it widened to about half a mile on both sides toward the neck of the loop. At the eastern end of the loop was the railway bridge crossing to the southern counties. At the western end of the loop was the aforementioned bridge, leading to New-Arad. This bridge carried the traffic of the main highway towards south, to Timisoara. There was an additional, third bridge, close to the center of town. It

was a beautiful bridge, designed by the same architect who had laid out the plans for the famous Elisabeth bridge in Budapest. This bridge saw very little traffic, connecting the city to the fortress, which sat on the peninsula of the loop. Military formations crossed the bridge routinely, the soldiers marching from their barracks in the fortress to the exercise fields west of the city. Strollers and lovers who wanted to enjoy the peace and quiet of the huge park surrounding the fortress, were additional walkers across that bridge. Amazingly that was the only bridge totally demolished during the war. The other two bridges (the railway, and the highway ones) suffered some damage, but were easily repaired in the fall of 1944.

In the unprotected area in-between the river and the dam stood a number of sport clubs. There were 3 rowing clubs, and in my recollection, they stand as the Jewish one, the Hungarian one and the one we belonged to. The most northward was the "Hajosház" (boathouse), a regatta-club, where the well-to-do Jewish businessmen and their families congregated. The younger ones were active in sports, their elders played cards and had a busy social life. As I learned later, amorous and illicit affairs often occurred, maybe because of the closeness of people in the summer season. The Hungarian club was called "Maros"; I knew nobody from that boathouse and believed that they are all anti-Semitic gentiles. Our club was located immediately to the South from the ascent to the fortress bridge, and proudly bore the name of "Hellas", undoubtedly a reference to the spirit of classical Greece. Gentiles and Jews, Hungarians, Romanians and Germans mingled freely, and as a child I did not notice any religious, racial or national antagonism, though it probably existed. I loved the club and its summer activities.

There was a municipal beach too, set again between the dyke and the river, sandwiched between the Hajoshàz and the Maros clubs, called the Neptun. The Neptun was roughly behind the city hall, separated from it by northern park. It was a large enclosure, with all kind of facilities. Amongst them was a ferry to the opposite riverbank where a sandy stretch expanded just below the greenery of the fortress park. There were delineated basins, one was not supposed to swim in the river itself. In my childhood those

who were qualified swimmers could obtain a small insignia from the municipality, designating them as "free swimmers", able to swim outside the beach area. One paid a small amount of money for that token that was sewn onto the swimming trunks. The river was dangerous, in the deep areas there were eddies and whirls, and every year a number of people were known to have drowned. It was possible to swim along the loop, climb out of the water at the neck of the loop, walk about half a mile to the other arm of the loop and swim back to your point of departure. It was called the "big circle", a circuit of some 4-5 kilometers, made easier by the fact that one swam with the current. Children were not allowed, and even grown-ups joined in groups, supervising each other. When as teenagers we were allowed to join such a swimmer's group, it was like a rite of passage to adulthood.

Farther northeast on the fortress side, there was another stretch of sandy beach. It was called the military beach; it was free and there were few facilities. One had to pay for the ferryboat passage from and to the city-side. It seems to me that this may have been the beach used before the above mentioned municipal one was established. In my early childhood, we occasionally went there. The military beach gained indelible notoriety in my imagination when sometimes in the late thirties a terrible accident took place there. On a hot summer day, a group of young people exuberantly climbed one of the high-voltage pylons. Felicia Trimbitioiu, the 18-year-old beautiful daughter of a prominent lawyer-politician, accidentally touched the wire, got electrocuted and plunged to her death.

On the stretch between the Hajoshàz and the fortress-bridge, (maybe a mile long), the top of the dike was asphalt-covered and festooned on both sides with chairs painted in white. The seats were removed in late fall and reappeared by the end of the spring. It was a location where in nice weather nannies walked their wards, before or after playtime in the nearby parks. Adjacent to the cultural palace, there was an open gazebo, where a military band was playing on summer evenings. This loud attraction induced extreme crowding on Thursday and Sunday afternoons; maids had their off-hours at that time. For "better" people it was not chic to mingle there on those days. We children loved the place on any day. At the southern end of the park, close to the ascent to the fortress bridge, was the "Gloria" club. Eight lighted tennis courts, a large clubhouse with a terrace and a restaurant contributed to make it a lively place. The smooth surface of the courts made for excellent ice-skating rinks in winter. During the war years the club was closed and the facilities deteriorated. I have been told that a hotel stands now on that location.

There was one small indoor swimming pool in the "Simay" bathhouse, close to the Moise Nicoara Lyceum. We did frequent it during the war when Jews were excluded from the municipal facilities. Another bathhouse was called the "Vas" (iron) baths and I do not know if it had anything to do with the iron-content of the waters or such was the name of the owner. At any rate even as children we knew that it had a evil reputation, although we did not know the reason.

On the main boulevard, close to the Railway Station, there was a small lake with a boathouse and some woods surrounding it. It was not usable for swimming, but in winter it became a skating rink. I have been told that lately a new municipal beach came up in that area.

Two blocks west from our home was a street called originally in Hungarian "the Dividing Street". It was a telling name: the broad, dusty road, paved with yellow cobblestones, indeed divided the better half of the city from the western outskirts. There both the houses and streets were more rustic: no bathrooms, often only an outhouse, big farm-like backyards used for vegetable gardens, livestock raised behind the house, etc. Crossing this area westwards one arrived to the outer limits of the city, where the airfield was visible. The field had a single tarmac landing-strip and a small adjacent building. Despite this insignificant aspect we were proud of the fact that one could arrive to our city by plane, although I do not think that during my childhood years there were any commercial flights to and from Arad. In fact, the only wonderful flying machines I do remember from my early years were most probably vintage First World War biplanes, flown by the Romanian Air Force. On the rare occasion when such a contraption was airborne, we children gaped and marveled at it.

In summertime one often made trips to the Ciala Forest, west of the city. The dusty and unpaved road went by the airport. The forest itself was pleasant for a walk, and more often than not it was a conduit to the Triple Islands. Located about 4 kilometers west of the city, these islets on the Maros were frequent objectives of a day trip. The knapsacks were packed with food, a water bottle was hung on the straps (if it was a thermos, by the end of the day the double-glass insulation was usually shattered), and we started out early morning, before the heat of the day was on. The group of children was usually escorted by an enterprising adult, and I do remember that "Uncle" Neulander, an active boy-scout leader, was our most reliable mentor. Once arrived to the Triple Islands (a trip of about one and a half hour) we played on the sandy beach, swam and in the afternoon made a big bonfire. It kept the mosquitoes away and was handy for roasting the bacon on spits. I never liked bacon and contended myself with the smell of it. We shared the beach and the river with livestock from nearby peasant houses. I remember vividly overhearing the mutterings of uncle Neulander, about what my parents would say, if they knew that we are swimming amongst horse-manure. At that time it did not bother us, we fancied those outings to be marvelous.

Solymos Fort

Other favorite daytime outings were into the wine-yard covered hills. The ruins of the Világos fortress in Siria, the ruins of the Solymos fort near Radna, the flowery valley of Cladova, all these places were easily accessible with the electric train running eastwards, parallel to the Maros. I do not remember how those trips were planned, but we children were always enthusiastic participants. Father was not a great nature-walker, and Mother rarely ventured on such a trip with only her children as company, but there were always parental friends and relatives whom we joined for such outings. All of the above places had small springs, hidden in the forest. We knew the locations, and up to this day, my taste-buds do remember the cold, clear water which we gulped down, straight from its subterranean emergence.

We moved to Timisoara in the summer of 1946, and I have been back to Arad only three times since. In 1951 I went for a short trip, in order to obtain a birth certificate from City Hall, in 1956 I accompanied a friend for a short visit, and in 1961, on our way to emigrate, we stopped in Arad for a couple of hours, waiting for our train connection. I have almost no recollection of those visits, it is, as if my memory selectively tried to extinguish those images that may have gotten superimposed on the landscape of my early years.

My brother Ed visited Arad in September of 1997. It was a short visit, he went to the cemetery, had lunch at a restaurant on the site of the former Neptun on the shores of the Maros, and walked briefly on the main boulevards. He was saddened by what he saw: a city that did not evolve with the time, everything grimy, forlorn and decaying. I have no desire to go to Arad. The locale of my childhood is long gone. What I would see is an alien city. The buildings may bear a resemblance to what I remember from my childhood, but this would almost be coincidental. It would look like a caricature of my mental images, void of the people and reflections I knew during the first 17 years of my life. The old Arad, which belongs to me, is alive in my memory and dreams and it will stay with me as long as I live and remember.

Family Background I

We are all the aggregate of past generations. The implications and the numbers are mind boggling. Every individual living today had over thousand ancestors as far as just ten generations back. Who were they? Where did they live? How did they look? What

kind of people were those one thousand and twenty-four, 17-18 th century men and women, from whom do I descend? The question in this form addresses barely three hundred years. How about trying to go back a millennium or two? And how about 300 generations, going back to pre-historical times? The myriad variations in individuality are the results of the abundance and combinations of genes in the pool. As such we may share characteristics and features with distant relatives, without the knowledge of a family tie.

Most of us do not know our ancestry, ascending for more than two or three generations. One of the reasons may be the fact that some of our predecessors may not have been educated people. As such we have not enough documentation concerning their lives. This may be connected to another of the reasons: the "Wanderlust" displayed by our Jewish forefathers. The term is in fact misleading, the peregrinations of successive generations were, more often than not, imposed by economic or political conditions. The nomadic way of life was mostly a consequence of outside pressure and oppression. Even as a youngster, when I did not yet see things in the light of my later experiences, I was wondering how come that the graves of the fathers are always in a different place from their offspring's? I also noticed that many parents of my acquaintances had names different from their grandparents. Typical of this is the story of my friend Tommy Gordon. Neufeld was his grandfather's name and his father became Ujhelyi. I hope his son - now in Israel - will stay with Gordon.

I myself have reasonably good knowledge about my ancestry only going back for two generations. Exception is one maternal line of educated people where information and tradition were perpetuated and documented from one generation to another, for at least two more ascendants. Almost all the ancestors about whom I do have some knowledge, lived in that corner of Europe which in-between the years 1867-1918 was known as the Austro-Hungarian Empire. That was the period of the fast emancipation of the Jews, ending the discriminatory and constraining, almost mediaeval, anti-Jewish legal and social practices.

My paternal grandfather was **Ede Tausk** - Ede being the Hungarian form of Edward. He was born in the year 1859 in what is now the Slovak Republic, in a place called Jilina. At that time, it was Zsolna in Hungary, and it was to become after 1867 part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. I have no factual data on the family of Ede, only some vague oral information. His father **Joachim** supposedly had nine or ten male siblings, and it seems to me that I was told that all of them grew into adulthood - a rare event in those times. I have hard data only on one of Joachim's brothers, a man called Lezer - the Yiddish way of spelling Lazar. He lived in Kolarowice, and fathered a slew of children. One of his descendants, Robert Tausk, lives in Holland and doggedly pursued the family tree. He came up with an amazing number of names - and fates, all people distantly related, and not known to me. His task was made easier by the fact that Tausk is an extremely rare name. Family lore holds that it stems from the township of Taus in Bohemia. Today the

place is called Domazlice and it is located in the Czech Republic. At any rate, in the famous old Jewish cemetery in Prague, there is a tombstone of a rabbi Tausk from the 17th century. In the adjacent Jewish Museum, there is an embroidered shawl, supposedly the handiwork of his spouse. In the book of Rafael Patai "The Jews in Hungary" I came across a Sender Tausk, a young Jew from Prague, who around 1680 was instrumental in trying to save the Jews from Buda, on the occasion of the reconquest of that city by the Austrian forces from the Turks.

In pursuing the ascendancy of different Tausks, Robert found that the name of Jilina cropped up repeatedly. I came once upon the family name in the hungarianized spelling as Tauszk, (in Hungarian the letter "s" is pronounced as "sh"; by combining s and z, one gets the sound of the English s), Ferencz by the surname, who was a well-known physician in pre-World War I Budapest. Father knew him as a cousin of Ede Tausk. I have had contact with other people from the list of Robert Tausk, like Dr. Silfen in Israel, Mrs. Haimovici in Cleveland, Ohio or János Gáti in Queens NY.

(I insert here the translation of a letter written in German by Tomas Tausk from Prague to Robert Tausk - the official family-chronicler):

Prague, July 16, 1989. Dear Mr. Robert:

I have received your kind letter over a month ago, but I temporized with the answer, in order to be able to collect the more information.

First of all, I had no inkling about the letter exchanges between my brother and your father, and as such your letter was a big surprise. I would like hereby to excuse my brother for not answering your query; you have only partially guessed the real reason. He has indeed changed address, but he had moved to a land that does not allow return. On May the 3-d of last year he had passed away at the age of 61 years, as a result of a brain tumor. Although you had no occasion to meet him in person, please think of him with compassion, he was a very decent man.

Presently I would like to give you some information on our common name. In the way it is written, it is extremely unusual in our republic, may be even unique. As far as I have been able to ascertain, there are presently four people in Bohemia and Moravia, who bear the name: my cousin Pavel (63 years old), my grandchildren Jakub (8 years old) and Simon (8 month of age) and myself at the age of 56. The family of my father comes from Ivanovice na Hane, a Moravian village close to the town of Vyskov (in case you want to check on a map).

Watch out, now comes an information, shocking for you: the name is Jewish. At

any rate this may be the reason it is so rare here: almost all of my relatives did perish in the concentration camps; even before the war the name Tausk was so unusual that practically, all of the Tausk's were kinsfolk. Only my father and my uncle did survive, because they were somewhat protected by their "Arian" spouses: they came into the KZ-camps only at the end of the war. To-day they are both dead. Not to forget my cousin Pavel, who miraculously survived 3 years in Auschwitz. Upon his liberation he was down to 28 kilograms, and it took 3 months for him to remember who is and what his name is. He returned home in 1945. Presently he is still alive and retired.

Returning to our name: it is almost sure that it comes from a locality, Domazlice (in German is Taus) sited in Western Bohemia. In the old Jewish cemetery in Prague (which, by the way is the second oldest Jewish burial place in Europe), the first tombstone by this name dates to 1531. It belongs to Jehuda, son of Meir Tausk, and there is a poetic inscription (obviously in Hebrew, and I give you the approximate German translation - *translated in to English by me*):

"A true man is buried here; all his deeds were based on the truth. Devotedly he prayed, in his piety he was brave as a lion, deflecting ire and anger. Juda cherished the law of the Lord, and used to do good in Israel. Straight was his way in service; he joined his people on the new moon of the month of Marcheschvan 292 by the count, and his soul should be mentioned in the bund of life, and he died on the fourth day"

(Jehuda, son of Rabi Meiir Tausk, died on October, 11, 1531).

The next tombstone that most probably covers one of our forefathers, originates from the year 1546, and belongs to Jakob Meir Tausk (died on September 22, 1546) the son of Jehuda. His epitaph is similarly poetic:

"There is nothing akin to this position of Jakob, since it was him to create it. Stormy moves my heart as my father died, my lord, Jakob Meir Tausk, son of Jehuda, blessed be his memory, on the 26-th of the month Tishri, 307 according to the minor time reckoning, and his soul should be included into the bund of life."

Apparently, in-between the different pogroms, the Tausk family occupied an important position in the Prague Jewish community. In the Jewish Museum of Prague, there is a magnificent collection of Synagogue-textiles (it is the largest in the world); it contains a splendid synagogue-drape, offered by Meir Tausk and his spouse to the Alt-Neu Synagogue. Another synagogue-drape from the year 1683, comes from Reichl, the spouse of Leb Tausk. In the year 1683, a certain Isak Tausk, became the chairman of the Jewish community. His role was later taken over by his son, Samuel Saxl, who managed to obtain a number of reliefs for the community. He was so active in his position, that he even managed to get jailed (based on a calumny) in 1704. To commemorate his coming out from the prison, he has had composed a Megilla, probably by his kinsman Chaim Tausk (Megilla Samuel). It was finished around 1720, and the manuscript was still extant before

the war in a library in Frankfurt am Main.

But enough of family history. As far as professions are concerned, the chemistry became a family-curse of the Czech Tausk's (apparently it seems to me of the Dutch ones too). My father, my brother and myself, we had studied chemistry at the Prague Technical University.

Finally, I would like to convey a couple of words about myself: the relation in-between height and weight is less favorable than 2:1, I am a smoker and a temporary non-tippler. My first (and only one) matrimony has been going on since 1956; my spouse Hana (Roman-Catholic, and in addition a chemist too) tolerates patiently this situation. Unfortunately, we have only one child (I patently envy you). Our daughter, Sabina, has a Ph.D. in law; she kept her maiden-name even after her marriage, consequently both my grandchildren are carrying the name Tausk. I live in a huge apartment-block, in a quiet street, not far away of the airport and the bus exit-route. As of this writing they do repair-work on the water-pipes; it should not cause possible uneasiness about handling my letter, I do diligently and often cleanse myself, in water heated on the gas-burner.

I just hope that the length of my letter will not cause dread and will not keep you away from further correspondence. In case you may be worried that you will have to do with the results of my grapho-mania, I have to reassure you, I promise that I will better myself.

Best regards, yours

My address is: Ing. Tomas Tausk; Mozambicka 622.

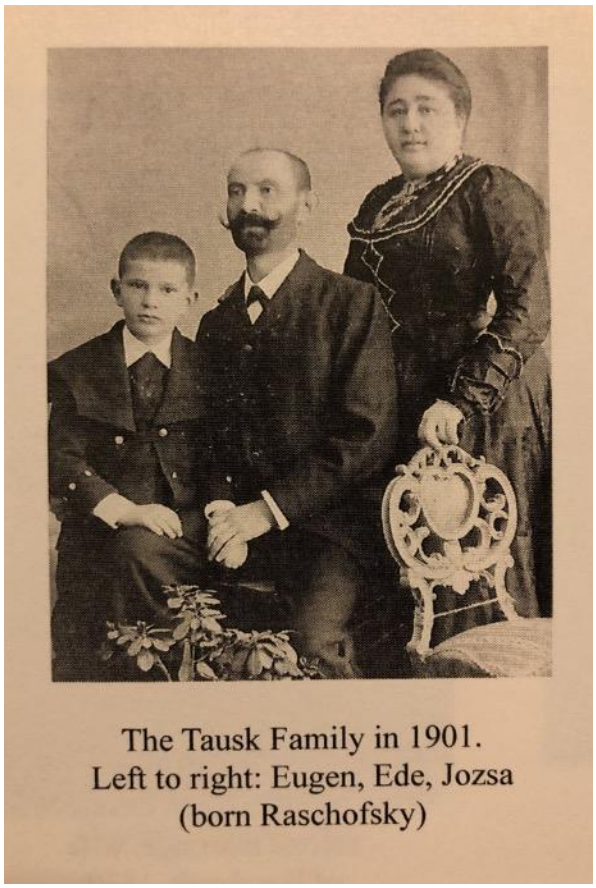
160 00 Praha 6-Vokovice. Czechoslovakia.

Ede Tausk seemingly did attend a teacher's seminary, because the first official mention I have of his name is in a school certificate from 1889. The name appears already in the Hungarianized form, Tauszk (in fact both my father's birth certificate as well as mine was in the "Hungarianized" form; the letter "z" was omitted by the Romanian authorities when new personal documents were issued under communism in the year 1949). This document is a high-school certificate of a grandson of Lezer Tausk, Victor by the name, and as such a relative of his teacher. Victor Tausk later acquired notoriety as a disciple of Freud; he had a falling-out with him and committed suicide. It was one of the early controversies surrounding psychoanalysis and there are contradictory opinions in the specialty literature concerning the blame. As recently as the 1970's, a book by Roazen, "Brother Animal", as well as one by Eissler, "Talent and genius", dealt with the affair.

Victor Tausk had two sons: Hugo and Marius. Hugo was a lawyer, he lived in Brazil and came home before his death to Graz, Austria. Marius studied medicine, as a young doctor he moved to Holland and became there an endocrinologist. As a scientist, he progressed on, to be the director of research at the Organon company and university professor in Utrecht. He lived in Nijmegen, I entertained a correspondence with him and we visited his home twice. Marius had published as a book the writings of his father Viktor, and he kindly gave us a copy. Marius passed away some years ago, and I continued to exchange letters with his oldest son, Hein (Dutch for Henry) a retired chemical engineer, and I even visited him in the French part of Switzerland; he has since passed away. Niels, the youngest son of Hein, is an accomplished jazz trumpet player, he stayed once with us while visiting New York; I have information on him via the internet. I met Robert a couple of times, and he keeps me posted of every new discovery on the family tree. I also met the son of Robert, Otto Tausk, a conductor, who has recently become the music director of the Vancouver Philharmonics; we had attended the concert he had conducted with the New Jersey Symphonic Orchestra in October 2018.

At the time of the meeting of Victor and Ede Tauszk, the latter was teaching religious education in the Sarajewo high school and in the biography of Victor there is a mention about a disagreement he had with his religion instructor. I was not able to ascertain if that conflict involved my grandfather. Ede did meet a young lady by the name of **Josephine Raschovsky** who came to visit an aunt and he married her. Afterwards they moved to Lugos (named later Lugoj, during Romanian sovereignty), a mixed Hungarian-German and Romanian township in the Banat - the Southeastern corner of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Ede became a teacher at the local elementary grade school, and at the same time he functioned as the secretary of the Jewish Community. (...) Father told me once that grandfather Ede was a better than average chess-player, and that he had spent many hours in the "Kaffeehaus" sitting at the chessboard. The Kaffeehaus was one of the important establishments in the social life in Austro-Hungary. It was a males only institution, one could sit for hours with just a coffee, reading the newspapers, playing chess, cards, billiard, or just talk to friends. On the few photographs we possess, Ede Tauszk is an earnest-looking, bald man, who looks through old-fashioned glasses straight into the viewer’s eye. A dark goatee and the than-fashionable twirled mustache, are partially hiding the face. The attire is a dark suit, with the stiff, high collared white shirt, worn at that time by aspiring middle-class people. I know from the narrative of Father, that the collar, the cuffs and the breast-part of the shirt were made of white celluloid. They were the permanent part connected to a detachable soft undershirt. That cotton shirt was the only component of this assembly which got washed on a regular basis. The celluloids were worn winter and summer, until they got yellowed and frayed. Sometimes in 1920, grandfather Ede got sick, had painful abdominal cramps and swelling of the belly. He was taken by train to the closest big city, Timisoara, admitted to the hospital (the Bega Sanatorium, run by a famous surgeon, Dr. Cindea) but could not be operated and died

there shortly afterwards. It seems to me that he may have had intestinal obstruction, probably due to a malignancy of the colon. All the above information came to me third-hand: I was not yet born and Father at that time lived abroad, unable to came home because of the tumult of the post World War I years. Ede Tauszk is buried in the Jewish cemetery of Lugos, as a child I occasionally accompanied my father visiting his grave. There may have been a Jacob Tausk, a brother to Ede, but I am not even sure that he existed, and Mother had no knowledge of him. According to the data of Robert Tausk his descendants live in the USA



The Tausk Family in 1901.
Left to right: Eugen, Ede, Jozsa
(born Raschofsky)

Jozsa Tausk (born Rashofski)
in 1934

Ede Tauszk was married to **Josephine Raschofsky**, known as Granny Jozsa to me. Her parents, my Raschofsky great grand-parents, lived in Nagyszentmiklos, later known as Sinicolaul Mare during Romanian times. Again, I have one photograph but no written documentation on them, all I know that they had a grocery store and augmented their income by making vinegar. Given that the area is agriculturally highly productive and cucumbers were one of the products, this may have been a lucrative business. Pickled gherkins were a favorite addition to the heavy and rich food consumed in those times. The Raschofsky's had two sons and a number of daughters and I don't know the chronological sequence. One thing is certain: all their descendants have in common a certain facial configuration which is called in the family "Raschofsky ponem" (ponem means face in Yiddish). Even as young people, they all had two deep furrows descending from the side of the nostrils past the corners of the mouth. In addition, all Raschofskys had the tendency to be overweight. Furthermore, Ed thinks that the male family members died relatively young.

Géza Raschofsky was the elder son and his offspring Stefan (Pista) was a cousin of Father's. He was a student in Cluj when uncle Géza died and he was unable to continue his studies. Pista dabbled a little in journalism and philately, and finally made a living selling rare stamps. He met and married a young Jewish woman of very poor extraction, who was an ardent communist. Erzsi (the nickname of Elizabeth) was smart and had plain

features. She converted Pista to communism, and after the war he made a career under the new regime. I do remember vaguely a visit of Erzsi to our home, sometimes during the war, it seems that she came to ask for financial help. Upon questioning it turned out that she wanted the help not for themselves, but for the underground "Red Action" and Mother wisely refused to get drawn into this illicit political activity. This rebuff did not leave hard feelings. Pista and Erzsi had no children of their own, sometimes during the 1950s they adopted a male child and Pista passed away in 1963. I heard later that the adopted son grew up to be a troublemaker, but I have no factual information about his fate. Ed had heard that he became a TV personality in present-day Romania, under the name of Rasovschi.

Ferencz Raschofsky was the younger son of my great- grandparents. He fathered two daughters by a first wife and a son by the second one. Ferencz died young, the orphaned children were raised by aunts and uncles. Elsa, the older daughter, was kind of adopted by my grandmother Jozsa and grew up in her home. She was beautiful and was lucky to get married to a well-to-do merchant. Sometimes in the early 1920s she had a baby who died in infancy. That loss and a puerperal psychosis made her "behave badly". That euphemism I did hear as a child, probably meant a sexually promiscuous conduct. Her husband repudiated her and in her later years she got married to another man. This mate was an anomaly, a Jewish man who made a living trading horses, and who could not write or read (perhaps only in Yiddish?). I knew Elsa and her husband as very destitute people, living in one room in a poor neighborhood. In the mid-1950's she was a sick old lady, wrinkled, edentulous and diabetic, a pathetic caricature of the beauty she may have been. I have no information on her demise.

Rozsi (Rosalie) was the younger daughter of Ferencz. She too was renowned to be beautiful, I remember her oval face, regular features and radiant eyes. With my present mind I would consider her rather pleasant and lovely, not a striking beauty. She got married to Marcell Plohn, an agile and smart businessman. He was disfigured by burns suffered as a soldier in World War I, as a child I was afraid of his scarred face. He was the manager of a big tannery in Sinicolaul Mare, he maintained his contacts to the owners when they emigrated to South America and he managed to get there with his family in 1951, via Israel. Rozsi is no more alive, on our last visit to Buenos-Aires we met their son, Nicholas Plohn, born 1932. Nicholas is also in the leather-business, specialized in alligator-skin. He is married, father of two daughters, and we had no further contact with them.

The son of Uncle Ferencz, Bertalan, was a young boy when he got orphaned. He stayed with his maternal relatives and in 1925, at the age of nineteen, emigrated to Argentina. Soon afterwards he was followed by his teen sweetheart and they got married in Buenos Aires. He changed his name from Raschofsky to Roberti and I knew him as Bartolome Roberti. Uncle Bercsi (that was the family nickname) started out as a peddler of house wares. He met a man from whom he learned woodwork inlay, started to sell his

own handiwork produced in the evening hours and slowly worked his way up. When I first met him in 1983, he was already semi-retired, a well-to-do manufacturer of inlaid wood merchandise. He had a son named Francis and a daughter, more or less my age. In 1947, when Francis was in the army, he was hurt in the back during an explosion. He became paraplegic, he lost most of the function even in his upper extremities and is confined to a wheelchair. Francis proved to be a strong man, he went on to study, mathematics and actuarial sciences, and got himself a Ph.D. Presently he is teaching at the university, and does consulting for some major insurance companies. He was also active politically in organizing disabled persons. He lives an active life, with the help of a paid companion. The daughter of Bercsi, whom I do know only as Baby, had a bad first marriage, got a divorce and lives now with a second husband. She has two daughters, the older one was trying her hand as a budding film-actress on our last visit (1989), the younger one was studying. I had no direct news for a while from Bercsi and his wife, and lately (these notes date from 1996) we heard that they are both in advanced stages of Alzheimer's, both in a hospice-home. I have no correspondence with Francis and Baby.

One of the Raschofsky daughters called Sofia, Auntie Zsofi, married a man by the name Grof, and they lived in what became later Yugoslavia. The son, Oscar Grof, was an engineer by profession, and was functioning as a professor and later the principal of a technical high school in Sarajevo. My parents used to visit him and his mother, every time when they spent their summer vacation on the Dalmatian coast in the 1930-s. Oscar was a reserve officer in the Yugoslavian Royal Army, he fought against the German invaders in 1941 and was taken prisoner. Seemingly they never found out that he is Jewish, and he survived - miserably - in a POW camp in Germany. One of his relatives even met him on his way back home, at the train station in Timisoara, in the summer of 1945. The home he returned to did not exist anymore. The Jews from Yugoslavia were engulfed in the Holocaust, the mother, the wife and the younger daughter of Oscar never came back from the camps. We saw their names on the memorial wall of the Jewish Museum in Sarajevo. The older daughter lives in Tveria, Israel, married to a surgeon of Romanian extraction, we never met them. When we visited Sarajevo in 1980, we could have met the second wife and widow of Oscar. We missed the acquaintance of the "Grofitza", as she was called in the Jewish community by a mere chance. The older daughter of aunt Zsofi, Alice by name, became a war-widow during World War I, never remarried and died childless. The other daughter of Aunt Zsofi, Ellie, married a Serb officer named Avram Baruch. When my parents met him before the war, he was a full colonel; they had a son, nicknamed Bratzo. It seems to me that Nicholas Plohn knew that Bratzo survived the war and lives somewhere in South America, but nothing more.

One of the Raschofsky daughters was married to a man called Friedman. There were three offsprings from that union. The son called Béla (Albert) changed his name to Farago, and I met him in my childhood whenever he came to visit my parents in Arad. He seemed older than Father and was always dressed with the meticulous care of a dandy.

The trouble was that even as a child I was able to notice how faded his elegance was. The cut of his suit was old-fashioned, the tie was threadbare, the cuffs of his shirt were frayed, his shoes were worn and shabby under the polish. It seems to me that he seldom had a steady job, and often Father had to help him to find an employment. In later years he got married to a gentile woman of the working class, and lived in her house in the suburb of Mikelaka, adjacent to Arad. One day she was found murdered, her head bashed in with an ax, and uncle Béla was the prime suspect. I do remember that there was a trial, and the family collected money to hire a lawyer. Uncle Béla was found guilty and was sentenced to a long jail term. He disappeared in one of the local prisons and soon passed away.

The Friedman's had two daughters, Blanka (Tana) and Rozsi. Rozsi got married to Julius Lederer, whom we called uncle Gyula. He was an employee of the taxation division and customs authorities in Sinicolaul Mare. By the time I knew him he was already retired, a street-smart wise-guy, and I suspect he was never above doing some little monkey-business himself. Sinicolaul Mare was located adjacent to Hungary and Yugoslavia, a corner of smuggler's heaven in the time before the war. Aunt Rozsi was about the age of my father (her first cousin), and she was the Raschofsky with whom I had the most contact in the family. Sometimes in the early 1950s she fell ill and was diagnosed to have pernicious anemia, complicated with some neurological degenerative features. Vitamin B 12, the prime therapy for this disease was not available at that time in Romania, and Uncle Bercsi from Argentina did send appropriate shipments of this drug. I was a medical student, earning some income by going to patients' home and giving injections prescribed by doctors. As such I was asked to visit the Lederers once a month and give aunt Rozsi her maintenance injection of Vitamin B 12. They insisted on paying the same fee (it was 5 lei per visit) I got indemnified by my other patients. The Lederers at that time already lived in Timisoara. In 1942 all Jews had to exit from outlying villages and townships into the county seats. As such all the Raschofsky descendants had moved from Sinicolaul Mare to Timisoara. The Lederers managed to get a two-room apartment in one of the poorer suburbs with a separate large kitchen in the courtyard. The parents and the two sons lived in the rooms, and aunt Tana in the kitchen. My monthly appearance was an event in the family, I was always served some sweets, had to sit down to listen to scraps of family gossip and talk politics with uncle Gyula. Occasionally I did go on a Sunday, and Father came with me, he called it a walk to Sinicolaul Mare. It was a big event for the Lederers, Father was a Raschofsky who had made it, his opinions were always respectfully listened to, and if Uncle Gyula occasionally disagreed with him it was mostly to show that he is not overawed by the successful Jenö (the Hungarian name of Father). In due time I took Judith, and later Vicza and introduced them, and they were accordingly welcomed into the family. Blanka Friedman, the sister of Rozsi was a simple-minded roly-poly, rosy-faced older woman. She stayed with the married sister and her family, and while in Sinicolaul Mare, she tended the small grocery business which may have been an inheritance from

her Raschofsky grandparents. She was the aunt Tana who moved with the family to Timisoara and stayed there with them, until her demise sometimes in the mid-sixties.

The Lederer's had two boys, Tiby (Tiberius), born in 1920 and Laczy (Ladislaus), born in 1925. Of all my second cousins in the paternal line, Tiby was the one with whom I had come in closest contact. He was a student at the technical middle school in Arad, and in his last school year 1937-8, he boarded with us. I remember him as a not too smart, soft spoken and benevolent young man whom I liked very much. In later years he became a communist party member and was employed at the railways company. He got married to a coworker of his, a gentile girl I barely knew, active in the security system of the railways. As such they were privileged, they made a reasonably good living, even got a new apartment, which was a big bonus in the 1950s. They never had children, and since we left Timisoara in 1961, I knew almost nothing of them. Ed visited them in 1997. Laczy, the younger son, was very good with his hands, he learned mechanics and made a good living in Timisoara. He emigrated sometimes in the mid-sixties to Israel. He married late, had a son, and lives in Haifa, Israel.

Another Raschofsky daughter was Juliska (Julia). Her only daughter Hajnalka, got married to a lumber-merchant by the name of Lorencz. John Lorencz must have been always hard of hearing since aunt Hajnalka did talk very loudly to him. It may have been the hard hearing, or the facial expression of the big, bald, red-mustached, bespectacled fat man, but he always looked lost and uncomprehending. He may have been indeed dimwitted; he was not successful while owning his lumber business. In later years while living in Timisoara, he worked as a night watchman and barely managed to provide for his family. Hajnalka was big, had a hook nose, unkempt gray hair, spoke with a thick nasal voice, and did not convey the image of a smart person. In Timisoara they lived in a one room flat in a basement, it reeked of poverty and failure. The two sons of the Lorencz's were Ivan, born 1926, and Öcsi (little brother in Hungarian - I do not know his surname) born in 1936. Ivan was constantly on my horizon during our years in Timisoara. He was big, heavyset, he had inherited the big nose and nasal voice of his mother. He unfortunately inherited a low IQ from both of his parents. Nevertheless, he always tried hard to prove himself and managed to be mostly just awkward. The girls whom he tried to court ridiculed or evaded him. When in company of educated youngsters, Ivan was trying to show off, proving himself to be ludicrous. One of his additional handicaps was his stutter, and I was often embarrassed in his company. He had only an elementary grade education, and learned tannery as an adolescent. After the war, Ivan became for a while active in the Zionist Youth Movement. There he met a girl among the Chernowitz refugees. She was plain and not very pleasant, as such never successful with the boys. The couple seemed to be destined for each other, they got married and sometimes in the late 1950s had a daughter. In the meantime, Ivan, who had a "healthy social origin", became enrolled in the Communist-sponsored Worker's Universities, and was sent to Bucharest, to study for a degree in the leather field. We never found out why, but after a year or so,

he left his studies and returned to be a worker in the leather factory in Timisoara. He claimed that they found out about his Zionist activities and repudiated him, as politically unreliable. We doubted the story, for he surely must have been whetted before being admitted to the Communist University. We rather suspected that he was not able to keep abreast with his studies, even in the undemanding settings of the Worker's University. My last meeting with Ivan proved once more, that he was basically a good chap, only difficult to bear because of his meddling. In 1961, when we were to emigrate to Israel, on the day we left Timisoara, Father was already very sick and train travel would have been too uncomfortable for him. It was decided that Mother and myself will accompany him in a cab to Arad, where all of us will board the international express train. Ivan who on the previous day was in our home in order to take his leave from us, made a big fuss about him knowing the only reliable cabdriver in town. He insisted on leaving the details to him, and we almost did not get a cab due to his well-intentioned messing around. Ivan emigrated with wife and daughter sometimes in the late 1960s to Israel, lived somewhere near Haifa, and died in 1992. The younger brother, Öcsi, lives in my memory as a child. When we left Timisoara in 1961, he was a young man, I did not have any further information on him or his parents, Lorencz and Hajnalka. Ed had met Öcsi on his 1997 trip to Timisoara, and told me that he looks like and is as smart as his brother and parents.

There was another daughter of the Raschofsky great-grandparents called Etelka. She married a man called Sebestyèn and they had three daughters: Margit (Margaret), Jolàn and Irene. Margit and her family lived in a Transylvanian city called Szathmar; their nineteen years old daughter Etelka was a house-guest of ours in Arad, sometimes in 1939. In April of 1944 the whole family got deported to Auschwitz, and none of them came back. Jolàn married an Austrian man, Erwin Kohn, and they were lucky to escape to Palestine shortly after the Anschluss in 1938. They established themselves in Haifa, opened a bakery and pastry-shop, and prospered. Uncle Erwin and Aunt Jolàn were extremely friendly and welcoming, when we arrived in Israel in 1961. When they retired around 1964, their married son, Johannan, took over and continued the business. The wedding-cake we ate on the occasion of Ed's marriage to Norma, was prepared by Johannan's skillful hands. I do remember how he endlessly elaborated on the advantages of using margarine instead of butter for such an occasion. Johannan is dark-haired, heavyset, a boring, good family man, with very typical Raschofsky facial features. He has one daughter Gabriella, and I did not hear anything from them, since we left Israel. Irene got married to a Mr. Deutsch, they somehow managed to survive the war-torn Yugoslavia fleeing to Bari, Italy. From there they emigrated to Israel in 1948, and lived close to Tel-Aviv with their daughter. When we arrived in 1961, the Deutsch's were managing a small "kiosk" in the old judicial district. The daughter was married to a sergeant-major in the Israeli Army. I do not know what happened to all of them thereafter.

Family Background II

The most important Raschofsky girl - from my point of view - was Josephine, nicknamed Józsa, who became my grandmother. Born in 1868, she was educated beyond the other sisters, except perhaps Zsofi. Jozsa studied at a teacher's seminary in Budapest, and for a while taught elementary grade. I do not know how and when she met the other teacher, Ede Tauszk, and I do not know where and when they married. All I do know is that by 1890 they were living in Lugos, and she had a daughter named Elsa. That daughter died as a baby, at the age of two, and I was told that Jozsa grieved for the rest of her life following that loss. In 1894 they had a baby boy, named Eugen, who was to become my father in due time. The household of the Tauszk family must have been a humble one. The Jewish community, the employer of my grandfather in his double appointment, was of modest size, probably no more than 4-500 families. I must rely on the vague stories my father told me about his childhood home. The small house they lived in had no bathroom, probably just an outhouse and the weekly bath was taken in a tin tub with hot water poured from containers heated on the stove. In the childhood of my father, light was provided by gas lamps. Electricity was introduced to Lugos only some time in the beginning of the 20th century.

Besides my father, and for a while the orphaned Elsa Raschofsky, granny Jozsa was busy with other children too. Elementary grade Jewish children from homes in outlying villages were entrusted, against payment, to the teacher and his wife who had a good name and was carrying a kosher household. Granny Jozsa probably helped the children in their housework, the only remaining outlet for her didactic career. Otherwise, she must have been busy with all the chores of a household, where water was to be carried from the well, and the heat came from the fire lit daily again and again in the stoves. The cooking was strictly kosher, which meant that meat could be served only if it was ritually slaughtered. I am sure that there was a kosher butcher in Lugos, but I suspect that buying from him would have been too much of a luxury to the Tauszk family. Instead, for most of the fall and the winter, Granny Jozsa bought every week a fattened goose. Picking the right one was a thing of pride amongst the housewives of those days. You had to be early morning out in the market, feel the belly and chest of the goose, decide about its firmness and softness, and haggle smartly about the price. The ritual slaughterer killed the goose in the prescribed manner and the rest of the work was done at home. The skin and the fatty parts were cooked in water. The resulting drippings were collected and saved in containers, used as cooking-fat during the rest of the year. What remained after this cooking was the "gribben" so typically Jewish that I have not seen or read about it in gentile households. The non-Jewish equivalent of it are the pork rinds. It was eaten in winter evenings for supper with bread and pickles. The liver was another pride-fostering byproduct in the choice of the right goose. Fattened geese had large livers, and their

presence on the table was again very typical of Jewish households. I even remember hearing in my childhood that diabetes (a disease quite frequent among Jews) may be caused by eating too much goose-liver. The liver which weighed often close to two pounds (one and a half pounds was almost a must) was cooked with some cloves of garlic in its own fat. That fat was mixed with red paprika and was kept in a cold place. For a snack it was spread on slices of bread or toast. Thin wedges of the cooked liver were added to it and enjoyed on the long winter evenings. The innards of the goose became ingredients for a hearty soup, and the neck got filled with spicy stuffing. The breast meat was marinated and smoked, making for another long-lasting, sliced delicacy. The remainder of the meat was used for cooking and often found its way into the mandatory Saturday "scholet".

My recollections of Granny Jozsa are fragmentary and minimal. In my childhood, she must have been close to seventy years of age, a heavyset, pale-faced, gray-haired lady, with the typical Raschofsky features, clad mostly in old-fashioned dark clothes. She lived in Lugos until about 1933 or 1934, and I have no recollection of her house, although I must have visited her there. When she moved to Arad, she boarded for a while with aunt Riesz, who owned the neighborhood grocery store owned by us. Granny Jozsa had a sunny room, looking out onto the garden, less than a hundred yards from our house. After a pneumonia she moved into our house and stayed with us for another year or so until a second bout of pneumonia took her away in 1935. I do remember the commotion, when Father, all clad in black, was leaving for the trip to Lugos, to have her buried next to her husband. I asked Mother about her rapport with her mother-in-law. She remembers having a cordial relationship, made somehow difficult by the sickliness and pessimistic nature of my grandmother. Her constant refrain seemed to have been: "such a thing could happen only to us". There must have been a cultural gap too, besides the generational one. Mother came from a household where literary knowledge was important, and knowing foreign languages was taken for granted. Granny Jozsa, despite her early education as a teacher, had a hard life. She for sure was not on par culturally with her young daughter-in-law, despite her fluency in German, the common language of educated Jewish people. Additionally, it must have been hard on Granny, to see her son and grandchildren live in a household where no Friday evening blessing was done, the

Bridal kerchief of Johanna (Hanny) Singer, embroidered by her for her 1855 wedding with Dr. Sigmund Herzog.

Sabbath was not observed and pork was eaten freely. All of the above must have been balanced with the proud and happy knowledge that her son is a successful citizen and has a peaceful and harmonious family life.

The Jellinek family in 1912. L-R: Charlotte (born Nemeth), Dr. Henrik Jellinek, daughter Anna, Ilona Brummer (cousin to Charlotte)

My maternal grandfather was Henrik (Hungarian way of Henry) Jellinek. He was the son of Károly (Hungarian way of Carl) Jellinek and a second wife, born Pollack. I know little of my great-grandfather Carl, he lived in a small German-Hungarian village called Guttenbrunn (Hidegkút in Hungarian) in the Arad county of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Carl was the owner of a small grocery store combined with a pub, and family lore holds, that he liked to play cards with his customers in the pub. This, and possibly other non-businesslike attitudes led to insolvency. Carl Jellinek died destitute in Arad, well before the end of the century. There was a German provincial writer by the name of Müller-Guttenbrunn, who was born in that village. In his memoirs (published in the Vienna 'Deutsche Zeitung' in the years 1886-1892) he describes that poor hamlet in the second half of the 19th century. He remembers that he had problems learning in Hungarian at the school in Temesvár and that "Carl, our smart village Jew, got involved and convinced my people to send me to Hermannstadt (to-day Sibiu in Romania) where there are German schools". Furthermore, he writes about his father, who was supposed to be a smart and educated man, who traveled as far as Hermannstadt to sell the plum brandy, and who told tales about the German people there, descendants from the Sachsen. The problem with this paragraph is that Müller was a bastard child, who never knew his father. In all probability Müller substituted in his memoirs his father with the man who was supposed to be "the smartest man in the village", the village Jew.

Carl Jellinek had one surviving son with the first wife, Ignatz and four surviving

children, Moritz, Jozsef, Henrik and Paula, by the second one. Ignatz and Moritz emigrated to America (USA) around the turn of the century and there are only scraps of information on them. Ignatz died impoverished, soon after World War I, and once, during the Depression, one of his daughters asked (a futile plea) for financial help from Uncle Jozsi (Jozsef). Moritz had a daughter by the name of Olga, supposedly beautiful and successful: Uncle Jozsi met her in the 1930-s on the Riviera. She was the secretary and mistress of the famous financier Kahn. There was a son, Kurt Bauer (?), but no more information is available. My Australian cousin, Jancsi (Alexander) Kalman, has a document ("Vándorkönyv" in Hungarian, that had to be owned by any itinerant worker during his learning years) with the name of Jakob Jelunek, tailor by profession. Jancsi has no knowledge of any of his ancestry, and I have presumed that this Jakob may be the father of Carl.

Jozsef Jellinek figured as Uncle Jozsi in my early childhood, and was an important figure in the life of my parents. He was a lumber-merchant, lived in Arad and faced bankruptcy before World War I. Mother recalls that as a child, she heard her parents debating the matter. Henrik Jellinek wanted to offer his funds to help the older brother, while his wife was reluctant to part with all the nest-egg. Brotherly love prevailed, the more that in the past Jozsef was helpful, enabling his younger brother to finish his studies. Anyway, Jozsef got back on his feet, and during the war became a rich man. In addition to owning the biggest lumberyard in Arad, he bought houses as well as other real estate. In the 1920-s subdividing a big lot for housing construction further enhanced his fortune and in 1926 he bought one of the local banks. That was the institution to which he attracted the services of my father in 1928. Uncle Jozsi had married before the turn of the century: his wife Margit was beautiful. She was a smart and active woman, she managed well the affairs of the house, and probably was not above of giving good advice even in business matters. They were childless, extending their protection to two orphaned nieces, Irene Künstler and Anna Jellinek. Irene was older than Anna, and being the niece of Aunt Margit (the real boss in the home), enjoyed a better position. Aunt Margit died in 1923 and for a while Uncle Jozsi was inconsolable. Life goes on, sometimes in 1928 he met a woman 35 years his junior, fell in love and married her. Most of the family was quite upset, they spoke about him buying the beautiful Elsa, but Jozsi did not care. He enjoyed the newfound happiness, lavished gifts on Elsa, and lived a good life; those were the years when he did a lot of traveling, and filled his house with expensive furniture and works of art. Tragedy stroke in 1934 when Elsa had an acute appendicitis, post operatively developed peritonitis and died of the complications. Uncle Jozsi was a broken man, the more that his health was declining too; he developed diabetes. By than it was a treatable disease, but frequent complications often threatened the life and well-being.

I remember Uncle Jozsi as a big-bellied, bald man (shaven head), with the so-called Jellinek mouth (wide mouth, thick lower lip, well shaped upper one), who smoked cigars, wore dark clothing with a thick golden chain across his stomach, and spoke curtly and

authoritatively. We used to visit his home every Sunday around noon, Father in his Sunday suit, Mother all dressed up. When the weather was bad, we went in a horse-drawn coach, and on these official visits we entered the home through the main entrance. On other occasions when we visited with Mother, we entered through the back, from the corridor where there was an entrance to the kitchen too. The Jellinek house was an expansive (and probably expensive) house in an affluent neighborhood. One entered through a white-painted wrought-iron gate; the courtyard was paved with yellow flagstones. Opposite the entrance was a low building, housing the law-offices of Willy Szalay (the husband of Irene Kuenstler), in what probably must have once been the carriage house. That carriage house, as well as the main building were ivy-covered. To the right was the impressive mansion, the ground floor inhabited by Uncle Jozsi, the first floor by the Szalay's. We entered through an elegant light-yellow glass-paneled door, and ascended the ten stairs on a thick red carpet with black margins. Another glass-paneled door lead into the large living-room. I was impressed mostly by the ornately carved black living-room set of table, settee, upholstered chairs and armchairs. In my provincial hometown this ebony furniture was definitely an exotic affair. Of the rest of the large apartment, I remember only the white-tiled kitchen and the cook present there. She was a middle-aged woman who had red spots in her face. I remember overhearing that she suffered from lupus, and I mentally connected the word with the red facial blotches. The south front of the house faced a beautifully arranged, elaborate, sunken formal garden. It was so elegant, that we children were not allowed to play there.

The Szalay's had a similar apartment on the upper floor, and we visited there occasionally too. Irene Künstler, who as a young girl, had lived with Aunt Margit and Uncle Jozsi, got married during the war to an ambitious young lawyer, William Szalay (Uncle Willy). They had a daughter Gitty, born in 1919, and a son Tiby, born in 1922. The Szalay's were no kin to us, but their relation to Auntie Margit and Uncle Jozsi created a certain family closeness. There was no love lost between us and them. Mother always felt that Irene (who was older and a beautiful girl) was getting a bigger share of family love and allotments than she did. In later years Father was always turned off by the arrogance of Uncle Willy. Uncle Willy was always very elegant, forever dandified and treated everybody (except Uncle Jozsi) with condescension. My most striking memory of him is the gesture when, while expounding on a subject, he patted his forehead and announced that "there are brains here, my little fellow". My intense dislike of him stems from the occasion when I heard him telling a World War I story. He was a military judge, and he proudly revealed how he condemned to death the poor soldiers who were caught as deserters.

In 1938 King Carol of Romania, paid an official visit to Arad. On that occasion there was a steeplechase event in the fortress area, followed with a royal banquet. Father and Uncle Willy were both prominent citizens and as such invited to the events. Uncle Willy had bespoken for himself a gray cutaway, complemented with a gray top-hat and ascot, just like on pictures from the British equestrian events. Father in his striped black pants

and black jacket was definitely commonplace, and he thought that Uncle Willy overdid it making himself ridiculous. The dislike between Father and Uncle Willy transcended personal relations. Szalay was the legal counsel of the bank, owned by Uncle Jozsi and managed by Father. This created ample potential for professional divergences. Father often had long discussions with Uncle Jozsi concerning the business decisions. Occasionally these decisions were disputed by Uncle Willy. Uncle Jozsi was no fool, he realized that Szalay, vain as he may have been, is smart too. The differences often may have been more of style than substance. Compromise was often a way of ending an impasse. Another source of possible discontentment was the awareness of how Uncle Jozsi drew up his testament. Aunt Irene Szalay, the niece of his former wife, was to inherit half of the fortune (and in the years before the Second World War, the Jellinek estate would have indeed been a fortune in Arad). One quarter was due to Mother, and the other quarter was to be inherited by the Schlesinger children, also nephew and niece of Uncle Jozsi. This uneven and apparently willful sharing (although to the objective observer it appears equitable), resulted in jealousy on the part of the blood relations of Uncle Jozsi, and arrogant disdain on part of Irene and her spouse. Needless to say, that by the time Uncle Jozsi passed away in 1947, there was almost nothing left from that fortune, and the Szalays managed to grab the remainder. We were partially compensated by Tiby Szalay when we emigrated to Israel in 1961, but to her dying days Mother talked nostalgically about the magnificent jewelry she was promised and never received.

The Szalays managed to leave Romania in 1946 supposedly with help from the uppermost official of the country. Uncle Willy has been a classmate of Dr. Petru Groza, who at that time was prime minister. Tongues were wagging in Arad about a possible dalliance between the exotically striking Gitty Szalay and old man Groza. Gitty was tall, slim, elegant, always fashionably dressed and her appearance was enhanced by titillating accessories. I do remember the big, sleek, stupid Russian greyhound Sasha, Gitty was walking with. Uncle Jozsi was destitute at the time, and supposedly Szalay managed to get from him the safe combinations for the cash and jewelry stashed away in Budapest and Switzerland. After they left, there was a story about Gitty becoming the girlfriend of a Mr. Abelesz, a rich businessman in Budapest. Supposedly he got her to marry his father, and the female baby born (who knows if from father Abelesz or son) had a legitimate issue. The older Abelesz's moved to Paris, and Gitty died quite young in a car accident. The rest of the family moved to New York, Uncle Willy died soon after, Aunt Irene lived to old age. Tiby is a successful lawyer in New York, he married late and has one son. I know that he manages the interests of his brother-in-law (?) now Sir Abelesz, who is one of the wealthiest men in Australia. I saw Tiby once at the funeral of Dr. Windholz, he looked the older self of the young man I remembered from Arad. He for sure had no idea of my presence. Despite common acquaintances, we reciprocally ignored our coexistence in the same city.

Paula was the only daughter of the Jellinek great-grandparents. Mother knows

about an unhappy romance as a young girl - she had not enough dowry, therefore the man would not marry her. Supposedly a beautiful girl, she got married to Farkas (Wolf) Schlesinger, a widower who was a lumber-merchant too. Schlesinger had a boy from his fist marriage, who died of consumption in World War I. The Aunt Paula whom I knew in my childhood, had the Jellinek mouth, was gray-haired, wrinkled and spoke with an energetic and severe voice. Her husband, Uncle Farkas, was a wizened, kind old man, small of stature, with a lame leg. It came to me as a surprise when I found out from a newspaper item that he writes poetry. As a businessman he probably was always in the shadows of his brother-in-law, Jozsi Jellinek, and although he provided adequately for his family, he never managed to get affluent. The two children of the Schlesinger's were Kari (Carl) born in 1900 and Illy (Ilonka) born in 1904. They were first cousins of Mother, and were a presence through most of her life. Kari, a handsome, not too smart man, had a close encounter, while a young man. A sarcoma was diagnosed on his left forearm, excision was performed at a Berlin hospital, and except for a partial paralysis of his left hand he recovered completely. Both children changed their last name to Sebes. In 1929 Kari got married to a beautiful girl, who became Aunt Macza for us. They had two children, Vera and Desiderio. Everybody called the latter Öcsi. They emigrated to Israel, Macza died many years ago, Kari passed away close to his 96th birthday in February of 1996. Vera and Öcsi have their own families, we seldom met. Vera's husband worked in the Israeli diplomatic service, she is divorced, with children of her own, growing up. The children of Öcsi are now adults, his eldest daughter made a career in banking. I was told that when I met Öcsi and Vera at an Arader meeting in 1991 in Tel-Aviv, they took offense at my supposedly casual and distant attitude - I have no recollection of having been unfriendly.

Illy attended the same school as Mother, for a while they had even common friends, though they had never been close. She got married to a businessman from Cluj, by the name of Kálman. The union was financially not a blessed one, Mr. Kálman not only bankrupted himself soon after, but managed to siphon away much of Uncle Farkas's assets too. Conjugal life apparently was not happy either, Auntie Illy came back to Arad as a divorcee sometimes around 1930, with her young son Jancsi (distorted nickname from Eugen). She had an unhappy love affair with one of Arad's leading businessmen, and around 1936 married Mr. Ede Sebestyén, an undistinguished gentleman. He was a commercial agent, but not a good provider, I remember hearing that he spent most of his time in the coffeehouse, playing bridge. Aunt Illy went on to study rhythmic gymnastics. She opened her school for the children of well-to-do middle-class Arad citizens, teaching what has been something like Dalcroze aerobics. The Sebestyén's emigrated in 1963 to Israel, I remember that we welcomed them. Uncle Ede passed away soon after, Auntie Illy who was an excellent cook, managed for a while the household of the Gottesman family, owners of the Gottex bathing suit business. Around 1969 she joined her son in Australia, and luckily met Sanyi (Alexander) Frölich, originally from Arad too, a former classmate of Kari. He was a widower and more than pleased to marry Aunt Illy. It was a

blessed situation: he was well taken care in his old age and she was secure, surrounded by a small, loving family. He died some ten years ago, she passed away in February of 1996. Her son, Jancsi Kálman, born in 1926, was one of the second cousins with whom we had close relations as children. He was of Eddy's age, we often played together, and I always admired his manual dexterity. He learned at the technical high school and became a technical designer. Married to another playmate of ours from early childhood, Kathy Antal, they emigrated to Australia in the early 1960's. They are childless, retired by now, and they welcomed us heartily when we visited them in the 1980s.

Family photo, probably from 1868.
Back Row, L-R: Hermann Hirschl,
Charne-Charlotte Herschel (born Herzka),
Hanny-Johanna Herzog (born Singer)
holding baby Sidonia Herzog. Standing:
Dr. Sigmund Herzog.
Front Row: The Herzog Children L-R:
Ida, Laura, Rosa, Jenny, Hermina
(Minna), Joseph (Pepi).

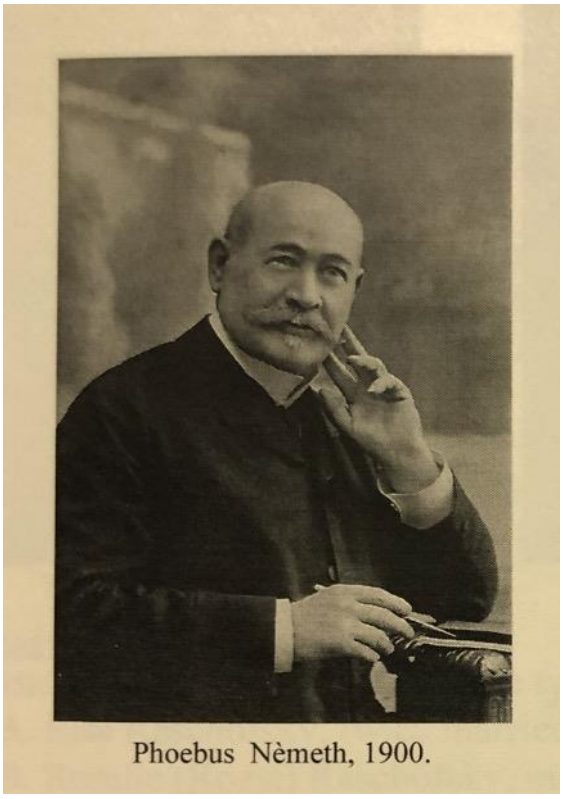
Henrik Jellinek was the youngest son of my great-grandparents. Born in 1871, he grew up when his parents were already broke, and had to overcome great difficulties to get on with high school and university studies. He managed to finish his studies with financial help from his older brother Jozsi and sheer perseverance. He got his law degree in 1894 in Budapest, but I did not find a diploma of a doctorate in law amongst the family papers. In later documents he figures as Dr. Jellinek Henrik. At that time it was customary for a young lawyer to strive for a doctorate in law or economics. I have to presume that Henrik obtained his doctorate after graduating, because he soon joined, as a junior partner, one of the prestigious law firms of Arad, the Kell offices. The little information I have on my grand parental namesake (I got my first name in honor of him) was transmitted via Mother, who knew him only in her childhood. It seems that he was successful in his work, he advanced to partner in the law firm, had a good income and a comfortable life. In 1902 he got married to the older daughter of a lawyer from Lugos, Charlotte Németh. Jenny Blau, one of the aunts of Charlotte Németh, lived in Arad in the same building as Dr. Henrik Jellinek. Presumably she was the go-between, in those times it was customary to enter into arranged marriages. A daughter, Anna (my future mother), was born in 1903. The Jellinek's had a cozy middle-class life, a comfortable apartment, two maidservants, with an active social life and vacations abroad. In my childhood I saw a group-portrait of tennis-players of the Arad sports club, my grandfather has a racquet in his hand, is clad in white trousers, a white jacket and wears a fashionable straw hat. There is a family photograph from around 1911, portraying my grandfather as a youngish middle-aged, earnest looking bald man, with the previously described Jellinek mouth, wearing a golden pince-nez and sporting a sharply twirled mustache. He was a reserve officer in the Austro-Hungarian Army. Mother recalls how he explained to his wife why he will resign his commission. Any officer was required to be ready to duel with any challenger; grandfather thought this to be a dumb stance. In 1905, he participated in a major war game exercises in the swampy area of the lower Danube, in Alibunar. Apparently, the exposure to the autumnal field conditions resulted in severe rheumatic disease. From than on he repeatedly sought and obtained medical attention with little improvement. It seems that one local doctor treated him with big doses of a new drug believed to be a panacea universalis. The resulting major intoxication led to the demise of my grandfather. He died in the spring of 1915 in a Viennese sanatorium. Supposedly the medical expert treating him there, told my grandmother, that he got poisoned by quacks from the provincial medical establishment: medical opinions were arrogantly formulated at those times too. He was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Arad. I often accompanied Mother on her visits to his grave.

Painting of Moshe Nemeth (the Hazerfresser) from ~1830.

My maternal grandmother, Charlotte Jellinek, was the older daughter of my Németh great-grandparents. They are the ancestors about whom I do have more information than on any others. The father of Charlotte was called Phoebus Németh. He was born in 1844 (I am not certain of the month) in Lugos, son of Bernhard Németh, (probably born in 1815) a tailor who suffered hand injuries in the 1848 Hungarian Revolution. As such he had difficulties exercising his trade, and the family was supported mostly with the yield of a small business, managed partly by Rosa, his wife. Bernhard died in 1880. A family portrait of the mother of Rosa Németh (born Deutsch, probably in 1820) "Muhme Tzarke", depicts an unattractive old lady, dressed in dark clothes. In 1842 Rosa became Bernhard's wife after being widowed from a first marriage to a certain Ignatz Neuerer; she lived until 1903. In those times the young children of a deceased man, stayed with the family of the man, and not his widow. There are numerous descendants from the first marriage, Mother had composed a complex family tree, where amongst others Edward Teller is present too. We owned a painted portrait of the father of Bernhard Németh, Moishe Németh, (the Hazerfresser), a good-looking man dressed in early 19-th century garb, looking very dignified and elegant. That portrait is presently owned by Gene Tausk. The Hazerfresser supposedly was a man who lived his life fully, he was involved in all kind of business affairs with gentile neighbors, and even had a gentile mistress. The father of the "Hazerfresser" was called "Reb Metz", substantiating the notion that he migrated to Austria from Metz (Alsatia), during the upheaval of the French Revolution. It seems that he owned another alias: Faisch of Sanktpeter; when he married a woman named Deutsch, he adopted that name as a family name for himself. He was an educated man, and he functioned as a rabbi for the local Jewish community. Most of the above are stories transmitted via my great-grandfather Phoebus Németh to Mother, there is no written documentation, although there are some family portraits and photos. Phoebus even told mother, that as a child he has seen a portrait of Reb Faisch, clad in a typical rococo garb, three cornered hat and shoe with buckles; the portrait does not exist presently.

Phoebus Nemeth, 1867.

Ida Herzog, 1871.



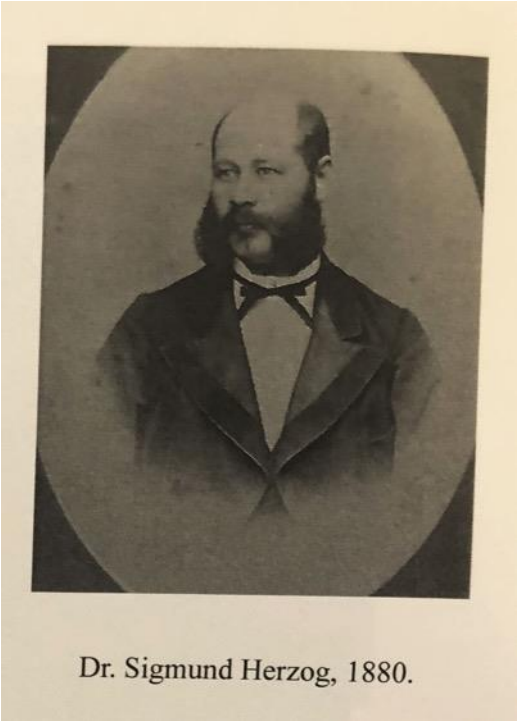
Phoebus Nèmeth, 1900.

Phoebus did his high-school studies at the Piarist gymnasium in Szeged (a Hungarian town on the river Tisza), graduating in 1863. The schools maintained by those Catholic educator friars were always considered superior institutions. Mother does recall, that even in his old age, Phoebus was able to converse in Latin, a dead language, studied assiduously in his high school years. Phoebus enrolled in the Law School of Budapest, and graduated in 1868 (his diploma is presently owned by his great-great-grandson, Gene Tausk). We own a photograph of the law student Phoebus Németh standing in a formal uniform. It was taken on the occasion of the coronation of Emperor Franz Joseph as King of Hungary in 1867, when the law students lined the main streets of Budapest and shouted joyously "Eljen" (long live). It is difficult to gain a clear impression from that old photograph, nevertheless great-grandpa Phoebus appears to have been a good-looking young man. After graduating, he settled in 1869 as district magistrate in the frontier town of Orsova, on the Danube. For a while he was the only Jewish magistrate in the Hungarian half of the Monarchy. In 1876 he got married to Ida Herzog. During his tenure as a civil servant, he appeared to have been effective, he even got decorated with a Turkish medal after he apprehended a Turkish robber who tried to hide in the area of Orsova. I remember the ornate, beribboned medal in its velvet box, a heirloom in the possession of great-grandmother Ida.

According to notes from my great-aunt Ilka, in 1867, after the political settlement of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, anti-Semitism was on the rise amongst the local Hungarian ruling class. Sooner or later, they objected to a Jewish magistrate and tried to

have him move away. In connection with this intrigue, Phoebus had a falling-out with one of his superiors in the Department of Justice, a former school-mate of his, and sometimes around 1890 he tended his resignation. He turned to the practice of law in Lugos. Mother knew her grandfather well, she was 19 years of age when he died, and she spent some of her teen years living with her grandparents. Accordingly, she is relating that Phoebus was an agnostic, deeply skeptical of religions and clergy. In social matters he was conservative, Mother was sternly rebuked by him when around 1920 she was enthusing about the working class and communist ideas: "You are a middle-class girl, you should stick to bourgeois values". He also opposed the idea of a girl pursuing higher education. Mother recalls that well after her marriage, she was shown a letter written by Phoebus to uncle Jozsi Jellinek, asking him not to support the wish of his niece (Mother) to attend the University. He had a happy disposition, liked to tell stories and share a good laugh, and often sang to the piano accompaniment of his wife, mostly operetta arias. The bookcase was filled with the German classics, the great dramas were often recited on long winter evenings with divided roles. The big Brehm, an encyclopedia of animal life, was read avidly by the grandchildren, with additional explanations from Phoebus. There was a huge, German language Old Testament, illustrated with Dorée copperplates, and exploring it was another favorite evening pastime - all this before radio or T.V. was invented. Mother does recall stories, related to her in her adult years, that in his prime Phoebus had a roving eye, his wife Ida was often crying and unhappy about rumored liaisons. The law practice of Phoebus was not a very lucrative one. Given the fact that he was fluent in the Romanian language, many of his clients were Romanian villagers and they usually were dirt-poor, payment was often a chicken, a dozen eggs, a basket of apples, etc. At any rate he was a respected local citizen, on the board of some local institutions. He must have been an ardent and loyal supporter of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

When World War I broke out, War Bonds were floated, promising a good return and loyal investment for a good citizen. Phoebus Nemeth invested all his savings into those bonds, he even borrowed money in order to be able to participate maximally in the war effort. Luckily by that time he received a meager pension for his years as a civil servant. When the war ended with the defeat and dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, great-grandpa Phoebus was broke and impoverished. He had broken his hip in 1915, and at that time no orthopedic or surgical treatment was available, I even doubt that an X-ray machine was already existent in his provincial hometown. For an old man in his seventies, a broken hip meant long weeks of lying in bed, improper healing, a shortened lower limb and painful limping. He was incapacitated, unable to work as a lawyer and strapped in gentile poverty. In his last years Mother seldom heard his joyful singing. Phoebus Nemeth passed away in 1922, and was buried in the Jewish cemetery of Lugos.



Dr. Sigmund Herzog, 1880.

Johanna (Hanny) Herzog, born Singer, 1880.

The wife of Phoebus Ida Herzog, was born in Zemun, (present-day a suburb of Belgrade in Serbia), daughter of my great-great-grandfather Sigmund Herzog and Johanna (Hanni) Singer. Hanni, whom I knew in my childhood, was born in 1834. Her parents were Joseph Singer and Henriette (Yentl) Hertzka. Joseph was famous for his business mishaps, he was always on the verge of a big deal, which ended in bankruptcy. His many other fiascoes generated the opinion in the family, that if Joseph Singer will build coffins, death will stop taking its toll.

Louis XVI table (Weissweiler style), owned by the family since 1830.

Henriette (Yentl) Hertzka had a sister, Charlotte (Charne), and two brothers. One of them died young, the other converted later to Christian faith, changed his name to Szarvadi, and nothing was ever heard of him. Charlotte got married to a well-to-do merchant in Petrovaradin, Hermann Hirschl. He was a prominent dweller in that Austrian border-town (today it is part of Novisad, a Serb city on the Danube), so much so that in 1827 he was accepted as citizen of the township and became an officer of the local burgher's militia. A document attesting to this, is in the possession of Mother (now in Ed's home), a cherished keepsake from the times when Jews had no last names, were not allowed to own property and were treated like vagrant gypsies. Also, in Ed's home are two "miniatures", small paintings on porcelain, of Herman and his wife Charne. As a legal resident Hirschl was allowed to settle, he even could rent one of the local mansions owned by a nobleman. This was important, the houses of gentlemen sported the inscription "Salva Guardia", which meant that no soldiers can be quartered there, no requisitions can be made for the army, and the house can be entered only by permission of the county magistrate. While moving into that house the Hirschl's found in the attic a broken, small Louis XVI table (in the style of the ebeniste Weissweiler), which they repaired. This small table is since owned by our family, it is the only piece which survived the many peregrinations of my ancestors. When we emigrated to Israel in 1961, we had to leave it behind, it stayed with Mother's cousin Marika. In 1994 it was smuggled out of Romania (objects of art are not allowed to leave that country), brought to us and artfully restored. I enjoy the elegant form of that beautiful piece of furniture, and hope that the children of Ed, who will inherit it from me, will cherish it too as a family heirloom.

Family Background III

Hermann Hirschl lost a significant part of his holdings after the Hungarian revolution of 1848-49. On orders of the commanding officer of the rebels, General Perczel, he had to sell all his merchandise accepting the currency of the revolutionary government. This money, the so-called Kossuth notes, became worthless after the defeat of the rebellion. Later he recouped part of his fortune, expanded into farming (with an associate) and continued to be a respected citizen of Petervaradin. At the end of the 1850s the fortress-town got a new mayor. This man, a former officer, often borrowed the carriage of the Jewish merchant. When Hirschl on one occasion refused the loan of his coach, the mayor got annoyed and wanted revenge. Hermann Hirschl was notified that as a Jew, he is not entitled to own real-estate inside the fortress-town, he has to sell his business and has to move away. The spat led to legal proceedings, a lengthy process which entailed among other things even an audience with the Emperor Franz Joseph in 1866. By 1867, the law of the land changed, former restrictions against Jews were lifted, and the

chicanery against Hirschl stopped. The Hirschl's had no children of their own, and Charlotte adopted early on Johanna (Hanni) Singer, the daughter of her sister Henrietta, a child born in 1834. Hanni passed away in 1935, at the age of 101 years. I do remember her vaguely, my great-great-grandmother, a shriveled, quiet old lady, wearing a black lace bonnet. There is a family photograph from 1926, when Ed was born, featuring the five generations: Hanni Herzog (born Singer, adopted in her childhood by the Hirschl's), her daughter Ida Németh (born Herzog), our grandmother Charlotte Jellinek (born Németh), and Mother, proudly cuddling her newborn, Ed Tauszk (at that time our name was still spelled in the old Hungarian way).

Johanna Singer was lucky to grow up in the well-to do home of her aunt, she was educated, probably well beyond the usual superficial polish given at that time to Jewish girls, who were intended to become good housewives. In 1855 she was engaged to, and soon afterwards married Dr. Sigmund Herzog, a physician. Mother showed me a bunch of letters, exchanged between bride and groom during the courtship. They both wrote in educated, literary German, using the then current Gothic alphabet. In one of the letters, the young physician, uses the term "passionate love", being rebuked for it by the shy bride. For the prevalent Victorian mores this was an unbecoming expression. Great-grandmother Ida, told that her physician father was often called over to Belgrade (capital city of Serbia), to treat a member of the royal family, and his fee was always a gold coin. I have the printed death notice of Dr. Sigmund Herzog from the year 1885.

Dr. Sigmund Herzog, 1880.

Johanna (Hanny) Herzog, born Singer, 1880.

After the marriage, the young couple settled first in Zimony (now called Zemun) and later in Eszék (Essek), both in present day Serbia. They had six daughters and one boy. The male offspring, Joseph Herzog, (Uncle Pepi) was one of the youngest. In his youth he

studied engineering in Graz, and with the advent of electricity, became specialized in installation of that innovation. He worked for the Ganz, the Electrical Company of Budapest, and had a number of patents registered in his name. He was delegated to tasks like supervising the installation of electricity in the Castle of Budapest, the summer palace of the Tsars in St. Petersburg and in the royal palace of the Dutch monarchs. Mother does recall well both him, and his wife Ernestine. They were childless and passed away sometimes in the second decade of the 20-th century.

Amongst the six daughters of the Herzogs two had no issue: Auntie Jenny who got married to Julius (Gyula) Blau, and Aunt Rosa who married Uncle Deutsch. In my early childhood, aunt Rosa was still around, she was another shriveled old lady in the entourage of granny Shari.

Aunt Minna married a gentleman by the name of Türk, who had a daughter from a former marriage. The common children were Metta and Hella. The former was slightly retarded and never married. Hella married a man by the name of Grossman and had a daughter Dora. The Grossmans were sent by his company somewhere in Montenegro, Hella could not stand the primitive conditions and divorced. It produced a big uproar: "divorce should never happen in our family!" nevertheless her mother and aunts were supportive, they sent her to Budapest to learn a handicraft. I do remember Hella and her daughter Dora, as well, they both made embroideries for sale. Dora may be still alive in Timişoara, an unpleasant, hypochondriac spinster.

Aunt Laura married a gentleman by the name of Schwarz. Their offsprings changed the name to Szanto. I knew Felix Szanto, cousin to Granny Shary. A daughter, Ella, got married to a man by the name of Izsák, their son Zsiga (Sigismund) was a bespectacled, quiet gentleman called by the improbable nickname of Fawn. Another daughter got married to a Mr. Schwimmer, one of her many off-springs is Octavian (Tavi) Mocanu, supposedly a gifted mathematician, studying presently in Barcelona. I had some e-mail contact with him and mailed him a detailed family-tree as well as some copies of family-photos.

Aunt Sidonie got married to Julius Brummer. They had three children: Lajos, Lonki and Anny. Lajos Brummer was an engineer, he was in charge of a section of the big steel foundry in Resitza (present-day Romania), married late and died childless. Lonki got married to a man by the name of Palterer, he was an odd fellow, a good provider for his family but unloved by the rest of the relatives. Their son Robert, was well known to me, a serious young man, a loner, a brilliant chess-player, he was for a short time even national champion in Romania. Married to a niece of our family friend Dr. Goldschmidt, he lives in Israel, and has a son and a daughter. We did not have had contact with him there. Anny, the youngest Brummer child, married a very gifted engineer by the name of Herz. He was an entrepreneur, built bridges and factories and became a rich man. They lived in Bucharest and had two daughters: Eva and Manne. Eva moved to Timişoara with her

husband, an engineer by the name of Przybram. After the war, he set up the Timişoara branch of the British Council in his apartment. Following the communist takeover, he was branded a British spy, and was jailed for many years. The Przybrams live presently in France, retired, they are childless. Manne Herz studied engineering, she got married to a Romanian man. The marriage did not last, she lives in Munich with Mihai, her grown son from that marriage, I have no contact whatsoever with her.

From my point of view the most important child of the Herzog's was their first daughter, Ida, born 1856. I was already grown up when she passed away in 1950, and she lived the last ten years of her life in our home. I do recall her as a quiet, wrinkled, small lady, with sparse gray hair knotted in a small bun on the back of her head. She spoke Hungarian well, but seemingly preferred German, it was the language we usually spoke to her. She knew French too, but I do not know how well did she converse. From this, and from the fact that she played the piano I have to infer that she got a superior education. The average middle-class Jewish girl in the second half of the 19-th century was taught only things necessary to manage a household and raise children. Omama Ida (that was the way we called her) did read good books in three languages, followed the events from newspapers and radio, commented on the news, and often wondered why the world is such a bad place. She had a small widow's pension (the Romanian state took over the pension obligations of the previous Austro-Hungarian Empire) and in my childhood I often accompanied her on the visit to the City Hall, where she was handed the funds. She repeatedly exclaimed that she must be the one person who is getting such income for the greatest length of time. We were in the 1940's and her husband became a recipient of retirement compensation in 1894. She did some knitting and sock-mending, but her forte was crocheting. Many of our small and larger lace-like handiwork came from her patient and skilled hands. I also remember how she washed and cleaned them. The crocheted lace-pieces were hand-washed, starched and smoothed on the dinner table on a felt cover. Patiently she stretched the laces with the help of a multitude of pins until the felt looked like a flat porcupine. When dry, the laces were stiff and displayed eminently their intricate patterns. She once crocheted a mauve tie for me, which I could wear also as an artist's bow tie. She wore old-fashioned clothing, long skirts and long-sleeve blouses, even during the hot summer days. She favored dark colors, her foremost concession to the heat was a light gray color or white on gray patterns. She wore white linen undershirts and white linen long-john pants. We were in awe of her, I do remember when I started smoking at the age of 18, it took me a while to let my parents know that I acquired the habit, but I would not, for a long time, light a cigarette in front of Omama Ida. She left some autobiographical notes, where she recalls that she had spent her early childhood in the home of her great-aunt Charlotte Hirschl in Petrovaradin. It seems that after Hanni got married, the Hirschl's got lonely and managed to convince the Herzogs to lend them temporarily their first-born daughter.

Ida Herzog married Phoebus Németh in 1876, and they lived first in Orsova, and

later in Lugos. Charlotte (Charne) Hirschl, the adoptive mother of Hanni, and at least temporarily of Ida, stayed with the Németh's after becoming a widow. It is alluded in family lore, that in her old age Grandma Hirschl, as she was called, became completely senile, difficult to manage and occasionally aggressive. In those days there were no nursing-homes and the younger people had no choice but to cope with the Alzheimer of family members. In some of the written recollections of Omama Ida there are data on the life in Orsova. The family residence was adjacent to the courthouse and the jail - her husband was the local magistrate. On one occasion a famous brigand by the name of Cucurescu escaped from the jail. Phoebus Nemeth was away on an inspection trip and Grandma Hirschl kept a hammer close to her bed, in case the outlaw showed up.

The Németh's had two sons and three daughters. The first-born son Arnold, died as a toddler of meningitis. Mother recalls that Omama Ida mourned her entire life for that lost child. The other son, born in 1883, Karl, studied engineering and at the time of his graduation was discovered to suffer from tuberculosis. At that time this disease was treated in the mountain sanatoriums of Switzerland and Karl was sent there. He seemingly liked it in the Berner Oberland, because after being cured, he settled in Bern. He worked for the Pulver construction company, building bridges. He must have been held in high esteem: he obtained the citizenship of Bern. I do remember in my childhood home, the photograph of a bridge over the river Aare, where repair-works were planned by Karl Németh. Before the First World War, he did occasionally visit his parents in Lugos. A photograph taken sometimes around 1914 displays an earnest young man, with a receding hairline, bespectacled, with a wise and mild facial expression. Mother clung to her uncle Karl, it seems that on his last visit home, in 1920, he promised her that after her graduation from high school, he will make possible for her to continue her studies. In 1921 he contracted a terrible skin infection, pemphigus, and succumbed after a short suffering. Omama Ida, because of the difficult times, was unable to travel to Bern to be at the bedside of her dying son.

Another daughter, Theresa, died in infancy. The youngest daughter of the Németh's was Ilka, born in 1882. She got married to a prominent lawyer in Lugos, Edmund Neumann, uncle Duczi. The Neumanns were well-to do local patricians. I knew many of them, their history does not belong to the present narrative, the only thing I want to dwell on, is that they seemed to be destined to cease as a family. Of the multitude of Neumanns, the only descendant in my generation is Frantzi Ürmenyi. He lives in Bucharest and although his daughter has a baby, his son had to adopt a child. All the Neumanns were gifted and odd people.

Aunt Ilka had a lovely oval face, small brown eyes, sparse brown hair and a pale complexion. She had a happy disposition, laughed a lot and often exclaimed in a high-pitched, squealing, peculiar voice. Conversation was mostly in German, although she often mixed Hungarian words into it. After she became a widow in 1935, she wore mostly

black or dark, old-fashioned dresses. The Neumans lived in a big family house in Lugos, a yellow one-storied "mansion", on Main Street, opposite the church. The upper-floor apartment consisted of many rooms, furnished with dark, somber furniture, filled with many interesting objects, books, a gem-collection, etc. Aunt Ilka lived all her married life with her mother in-law, old Mrs. Neumann, who was a strict and demanding lady. After both her husband and mother in-law passed away, aunt Ilka rented out the family apartment and in 1938 moved to Timisoara, to stay with her daughter, Marika. In a course befitting Ilka's character, they did not take an apartment of their own, however moved in with another authoritarian Neumann, the sister in-law of aunt Ilka, Mrs. Celestine László (Czöli). The trio: Auntie Czöli, Aunt Ilka and Marika Neumann, stayed together for the next decades, until first Czöli and later Ilka died. I often visited that old-fashioned dwelling on the fourth floor of a big apartment house. We, the younger generation, disrespectfully dubbed the place "owl citadel" - a Hungarian expression for an odd place. Aunt Ilka was a cheerful resident of that residence, subdued and terrorized with tender, loving care by her daughter. For the last decades of her life, Aunt Ilka was not allowed to go down on the street: the elevator was not reliable and safe enough, as such she must not expose herself to any possible danger. She accepted this, and the many other restrictions - mostly dietary, no eggs, no fat - with good humor and a smile. Aunt Ilka passed away in 1978, proof of the good genes in the female line of my ancestry.

The marriage of Duczi Neumann and Ilka Németh was blessed with two children: Marika (called Baaby by her mother), born in 1905 and Joseph (Burshi) born in 1907. Marika grew up in extreme closeness with her cousin Anna Jellinek - they were like sisters according to Mother. She studied mathematics and graduated from the Faculty of Sciences in Cluj in 1928. She taught in high schools first in a remote Romanian town (Rîmnicul Vilcea), and from 1935 in Timişoara. In 1945 with the establishment of a University in Timisoara, she became first a lector, and later a professor, acquiring on the way a doctorate in mathematics. Retired in 1970, she continued to teach gifted young people on a private and voluntary basis. Auntie Marika was always a strong presence in my life. While we lived in Arad, she often visited with us, and we spent many summer vacations in Lugos, where she stayed for the school furlough in the paternal house. Marika was, and I presume still is, an intense person, stubborn, imperious and extremely intelligent. She has a natural inquisitiveness about many aspects of nature, society and culture. A born educator, she always surrounded herself with smart young men and women and to this day she is treated with awe and respect by her former students. All of the above make her an extremely difficult person to live with. As a teenager student, Ed had spent the 1940-41 school year in the home of the Neumans, and it was an extremely traumatic period of his life.

Marika was always shy in personal relations, Mother repeatedly tried to introduce her to prospective gentlemen, but Marika always refused to even think of getting close to a man. She had no vanity concerning her appearance, was always dressed in plain and

unattractive garb, wore her thin hair in a small bun, never used any make-up. She has a strong, squeaky voice, with a thin and rare laughter. She was in her forties when she developed a male friendship, with one of her professor colleagues at the Israelite High School, a certain Adam Frucht. He was teaching philosophy, he was not too smart, a well-educated intellectual, during communism he wrote ideologically acceptable poetry, under the pen-name of Anavi. I don't think that their relationship, which lasted a couple of years, advanced further than intellectual kinship, the gossip was definitively averse to their friendship. I last saw Marika in 1961 when we emigrated from Timisoara to Israel, Mother visited her once in 1974, and Marika visited Israel twice, staying with Mother and with former students of hers. Presently she lives in her book-cluttered apartment in Timisoara, she maintained a lively correspondence with Mother and a number of devoted younger friends. She is under the tender and not disinterested care of the above mentioned Frantzi Ürmenyi. As a distant nephew and the only direct Neumann descendant at the age of 75, he keeps an eye on the significant inheritance, which will go his way if and when Marika closes her eyes.

Joseph (Burschi) Neumann graduated high school in 1925 and went to study medicine in Besançon, France. He developed a close friendship with a colleague of his, Lavollee. After graduating, both started to work in the biochemistry laboratory of the Ecole Nationale des Arts et Métiers in Paris. This is a place of high scientific prestige, their work in histo-chemistry was rewarded with professional advancement and Lavollee (the Frenchman) became professor, while Neumann (the naturalized one), stayed on as his associate. Joseph fell in love and lived together with Helene, an attractive divorcee, eight years his senior, who had a son by her first husband. During the war, when French Jews were rounded up and deported, Helene shielded Joseph and got him into a "maquis" hiding place. After the war they got married and lived happily until old age separated them: Helene passed away in 1991, Joseph died in 1995. I do remember Burshi (Joseph) vaguely, when during my childhood he visited his parents on summer vacations: he called me Riri, a French nickname derived from Henry. He was tall, reddish-blonde, balding and had a compulsive manner. I met him next on our first visit to Paris in 1966. He was very forthcoming, we were invited to dinner in their home, he took us out to see a big department store, he invited us to the Comédie Française. He was thoroughly assimilated to Frenchdom, some episodes from that visit created a lasting impression. In their home there was another dinner guest, and I listened with amazement to those two eminent scientists, discussing at length the cut and quality of meat, that they were buying at the butcher for a meal. There was a cheese plate on the table with three kinds of cheese, and I made the gaffe of cutting the brie the wrong way - I was promptly reprimanded by Burshi. A couple of days later, we were to meet the Neumann's for a light meal before going to the theater. Being a Tuesday, the museums were closed, and we visited beforehand the Galleries Lafayette, to stock up with classical records and some small gifts. When Burshi spotted me with the shopping bag, he became indignant, exclaiming: "you

can't go to the Comédie Française with a shopping bag". Helene tried to calm him down, saying that we will deposit the bag at the coat-check. It was of no avail, he made me run home by subway to deposit the bag in the hotel and join them after that in a bistro for a light meal. There too, he did not let me drink a glass of wine: "one does not drink alcohol before a performance of Molière". All this notwithstanding I found him interesting, friendly, highly intelligent, a caring relative, however strange.

Charlotte, the oldest surviving daughter of the Németh's' was born in 1879. She must have gotten a superior education, besides speaking German and Hungarian she was fluent in French and even read English books. I do not think that she got a formal high-school education, in her hometown of Lugoj there was no school for girls. I saw photographs of her as a young girl and in my opinion, she was rather plain. The elongated face, the strong nose and the narrow mouth, inherited from Phoebus, her father, looked far better on a man than on a young girl. She had dark hair and was deaf on one ear, stemming from a childhood infection. Charlotte, called Shari, grew up as an ardent Hungarian patriot, her heroes were Kossuth, the protagonist of the 1848 revolution, as well as the leaders of that uprising who were executed in 1849 - the Hungarian martyrs of freedom. Mother even to-day holds on to an album with a selection of Hungarian patriotic poetry, with the name Charlotte Nemeth, printed in gilded letters on the front. She got married to Dr. Henrik Jellinek in 1902 and moved to Arad. After the birth of their daughter, Anna, in 1903, the Jellinek's lived a comfortable middle-class life. Charlotte managed the household with the help of two maids and benefited of the cultural and social life of that mid-size city on the edge of the Hungarian Plain. There was a Cultural Palace, built in those years, with a concert hall, a museum and a library. The Jellinek's were active in the tennis club too. They are on a photography from around 1910, a group of men and women standing with the racquets: the women have big hats, white blouses and long skirts, the men sport Girardi hats and white cotton jackets. As a child I remember the swimming-suit my grandmother used - it must have been the one from her days as a young woman: black cloth with red trimmings, the short skirt covering her knees, the sleeves reaching almost to her elbows. She had a red parasol, to protect her from the sun. The Jellinek's had a piano, but I don't think Charlotte played it. On the other hand, many of the books I saw in our bookcases in my childhood, were inherited from the Jellinek's bibliotheca. There were yearly vacations to Budapest, Munich, Vienna, etc. It was not given to Charlotte to have the comfortable bourgeois life she may have expected as the consort of a prosperous lawyer, as Henrik died young.

After the demise of her husband in 1915, Charlotte moved to Lugoj to her parents, Phoebus and Ida Németh. As an ardent patriot she invested most of her funds in the aforementioned War Bonds, with the result that at the end of the war, she too became indigent. The land changed too; the Versailles Treaty transferred that corner of the former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy into the new Romanian kingdom. Living with her daughter Anna, in the small apartment of her father Phoebus Németh, Charlotte had to comply

with his old-fashioned character. My grandmother was skillful and made exquisite lacework, embroidery and other decorative handiwork. Her output was sold in one of the local boutiques, and she was offered partial ownership. Her father vetoed it indignantly, "you will by no means become a tradesperson". Charlotte was an exacting mother, despite her reduced financial situation, she managed to give her daughter, Anna, the best possible education. She did her utmost to make sure her daughter excelled in her studies, prodding and helping her. Enlisting the help of her well-to-do brother-in-law Jozsi Jellinek, she succeeded to bridge some of the financial hurdles. Anna graduated with honors from high-school, quite an accomplishment, considering the difficulties of the war-years. Charlotte was successful in finding a good husband for her daughter.

My grandmother Shari probably relished - vicariously - the happy family life and middle-class standards my parents enjoyed. Nevertheless, the long years of scarcity did leave their mark. I do remember as a child that Granny Shari was always tight-fisted in pecuniary matters. She was always stingy in affairs concerning her own household, and expanded this parsimoniousness to our whole family. During my childhood she lived in Lugoj, in a household comprised only of old ladies: great-great-grandma Hanni (until 1935), Auntie Rosa (deceased sometimes around 1936) Omama Ida and herself. Ed and myself, we spent many summer vacations in her home, I remember the loving strictness with which she tried to discipline us. In retrospect, it must have been difficult for those four old ladies to have in their midst two lively and often unruly children. Love, as well as a sense of discipline and duty probably overrode the unease.

After Hanni and Rosa died, Omama Ida and Granny Shari moved into an apartment in the Neumann house. It was a small dwelling, the windows looked onto the garden, a huge affair, my mother's childhood paradise. When Ilka moved to her daughter to Timisoara, my Granny and my Omama moved to Arad, first to a small apartment in the house of the bank managed by Father, and in 1940, into our home. They moved in with their used furniture, old stuff which I did not appreciate at that time. In later years my parents had that furniture repaired and we used it until our emigration to Israel in 1961. On that occasion we had to sell it for peanuts. I wish I could have now here with me, those handsome Biedermeier bedroom and dining-room pieces. Granny Shari and Omama Ida stayed with us, till the end of their days. They were integral part of the family, taking part of the household chores, shopping, cooking, mending, etc. In the evening most of the family sat around the living-room table, each one with a book, reading: Ida mostly in German, Shari in German or Hungarian.

In the spring of 1944 Granny Shari started complaining of back pains. She was repeatedly seen by our family physician and given medications. At the beginning it was helpful, but by the advent of summer the pain was almost constant, except when she was lying on her back. There were frequent air raid warnings and one major aerial Allied bombing of our city. On every such occasion we were running down to the basement, but

Granny was not able to descend the two flights. It was a terrible thought to leave her behind, while we scrambled to "safety". As such my parents negotiated with Mr. Talpai, a former janitor of the bank to move Granny Shari to their home, far out in the suburbs. It was a ground floor house, far away from every possible military objective (railway station, factories). Omama Ida moved with her, and was taking care of the nursing. The Talpai's were handsomely paid for the rented room, and either Mother or myself, we visited daily the old ladies, bringing a warm meal. After Romania broke with the Axis, and before the Russian troops arrived to our area, the Hungarian and German troops invaded our town on Sept. 10, 1944. We were forewarned and fled, just hours before the advancing troops arrived. Mother to this day cannot forgive herself, that she abandoned her mother and grandmother, despite the fact that the old ladies were well provided and taken care by the Talpai's. Our absence lasted for two weeks, by the time the Russians occupied Arad, we were back and found Omama Ida and Granny Shari unharmed. We brought them back to our apartment. Granny Shari took a turn for the worse, she was in constant pain, even while lying flat. Finally, a portable Roentgen machine was brought to our home, an X-ray was taken and a plaster cast was made for her to immobilize her spine. I do not remember if the physicians knew what is wrong with her or whether they told Mother. In retrospect I presume that she had a tumor of her spine, most probably a secondary one, possibly from lung or breast. Her situation deteriorated further, she had to get constantly morphine. Father went to the local Russian military hospital, got to speak to the chief orthopedic surgeon (he must have been Jewish, he spoke some broken Yiddish-like German) who refused to came and see a civilian patient. By the beginning of November 1944, Granny Shari lapsed into a coma and died. She is buried in the Jewish cemetery of Arad, near the only man in her life, her husband Henrik. Being a steadfast and loyal person, she refused during her long widowhood even the thought of remarrying, despite the fact that it would have been a definite improvement in her situation. I do remember her as a proud, energetic and strict person. As a child I probably never appreciated the love and concern she bore toward her grandchildren, who were growing up so differently from the standards she had set for herself.

In this narrative I am using the spellings customary in the Hungarian language. I am also using the terms of "Uncle" (*bácsi* in Hungarian) and "Auntie" (*néni*): in Hungarian the expression is applied for siblings of parents, as well as for adults whom one addresses respectfully, be they members of the family or not.

My Father: Eugen TAUSK (1894-1962)

My father was born on January 24, 1894 in Lugos (in present-day Romania it is

called Lugoj). He started his schooling early on, before his 6th birthday, at the Jewish elementary grade school, run by his father Ede Tauszk. At that time, it was the customary 4 year-course, followed by 8 years of high school, all in the same locality. I have little information on the school years of my father, but I know that he must have always been a diligent pupil. In those days every school edited a yearbook, and the names of the honor students were always printed in block letters and underlined. As a child I was repeatedly shown Father's school listings, and he never failed to make the honor roll. I have no information on the degree of closeness he had with his classmates. In later life he kept friendly relations with at least two of his class-mates: the previously mentioned György Szánto as well as Samuel (Táti) Ligeti (who as a child was still called Lichtenstein). Another of my father's close friends was André (Bandi) Steinbach, who was one class below him. Musical life must have been intense, one of his classmates, Traian Grozăvescu became a famous tenor at the Cluj opera; he was shot to death in his prime by a jealous woman. Father's other musically gifted childhood colleague, Oszkár Kirschner, became famed as a leading bass-baritone of the Budapest Opera, under the name of Kálmán Oszkár. Father himself was musically gifted, but I do not know how and when did he study the piano. There was an upright piano at his parents' house, and in my childhood, he often played our big piano for his and the family's enjoyment. He also was an active chamber music player, in my youth it was violin and piano sonatas, before my birth it was trios and quartets.

There is one family photo of his family, where my father aged 7 is shown with his parents Ede and Josephine (Jozsa) Tauszk. From such an old photograph it is difficult to find out the character of a child: Eugen is a good-looking child with a serious appearance, short-cropped blondish hair, ostensibly seeking confidence in the closeness of his severe father. The next picture I have is already taken in 1909, with an inscription to his father’s 50th birthday. Again, a serious-looking blond young man, still slender at that age. Nothing betrays the tendency to corpulence, which made its appearance in his mid-twenties. Father never spoke spontaneously about his early years and I, mindlessly, did not ask about it. At the present time there is no more information available, and I have to reconstruct an image from small and brittle fragments.


My father at the age of 15, then at the age of 26, in 1920

After graduating from high school (with honors, as expected) Father had spent one year in Vienna, at the "Handelsakademie". This school of economic and commercial sciences was the most important one in the Austro-Hungarian empire, and its graduates were as sought after, as to-day's Harvard Business School. The meagerly paid elementary school teacher could not afford to let his only son have an all-out education at that prestigious institution, and as a compromise Father took the one-year special course which dealt mostly with book-keeping and financial transactions. His year in Vienna must have been difficult: he lived in meager lodgings, possibly sharing them with a friend. Father skimped on food too: one of the few stories he told us was that dinner often was the trimmings of the fat from the Prager ham with bread. One of the few luxuries he indulged in, was an occasional visit to the Opera. It was in the standing-gallery, and he joined in with other young people, following the musical action from the score.

Subsequent to graduation from the Handels-Akademie, Father started with an entry-level job at the prestigious Budapest General Commercial Bank. A starting job was remunerated with 110 crowns, and Father used to tell us how on the first of the month he was handed out five 20 crown gold coins and the change. He and his friends immediately asked the teller to exchange the gold coins into banknotes: a gold coin was too easily lost. Father was lodging together with his childhood friend Bandi Steinbach

from Lugoj, who was starting his engineering studies. I know nothing about other friendships or amorous stories which may have occurred to an aspiring young bank-clerk in the heady days of pre-war Budapest; it was one of the liveliest and most cosmopolitan cities of eastern Europe. Father must have been good at his job, he advanced steadily, and by the time World War I broke out he had already signature rights at the Bank. This, and a (luckily minor) pulmonary TB infection, kept him out of uniform. More and more senior people got drafted and by 1918 (at the age of 24) Father rose to become a procurist in those days an important function and title). He even was once sent to Sofia (capital of Bulgaria), to straighten out a troublesome matter.

The year 1918 brought the end of the war and the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. In Hungary a socialist government was formed - soon degenerating into a short-lived communist dictatorship. All institutions were directed to create a self-governing inner structure, an employees committee. Father was a quiet man, liked by his co-workers and superiors alike, he became a member of this committee, which survived into communism. The short-lived communism was smashed by the forces of the "White Terror", fascist troops led by the admiral Horthy. Everybody linked in whatever fashion to the "Red Terror" was suspicious. The innocuous membership of Father in the employees committee was compounded by him being Jewish. The "White" regime was openly Anti-Semitic because many Jewish people had figured prominently in the communist dictatorship. Soon Father was called into the office of the manager of the Bank and told that he has no future in the institution, he should look for another job. Well-meaning friends helped him to get a position at another major bank in Bratislava. That city used to be the second Hungarian metropolis and was suddenly ceded to the new Czechoslovak Republic. His career in Bratislava was cut short by the bad news from home: his father fell ill in Lugoj and died. His mother was a widow, she was alone in a new world (Lugoj suddenly became part of the new Romanian kingdom) and received only a minimal pension after her spouse. Father hastened home to Lugoj, and joined the Lugoj Popular Bank as a procurist. By 1922, he was 28 years old, had a promising career in banking and it was time to get married. He was already starting to gain weight - the Raschofsky legacy - photos from that time show an earnest looking, bespectacled, slightly overweight, balding young man. One of the photographs caught him in an oblique angle, he looks like the Viennese composer Schubert. In fact, his friend György Szánto had described in a book Father as personifying the fictional figure of Pierre Bezuchij in Tolstoy's War and Peace; I always considered this comparison a great compliment.

Lugoj was a small place, perhaps 30 thousand inhabitants. At a charity tea of the Jewish Women's Benevolent Society, my father met a shy young lady. He liked her, they talked, and he asked for permission to visit her. Presumably he also got some information (his mother was for sure sounding out the gossip circuit) on the family and background of that girl. Orphaned at a tender age, she was raised by her grandfather (who at the time

was quite impoverished) but there was a rich uncle in Arad. The visits created a closer relationship, and in the fall of 1922 my father asked for the hand of Anna Jellinek. The wedding was held on April 10, 1923, very quietly, due to the fact that the bride's family was in mourning: she had recently lost her grandfather and also the wife of her uncle in Arad, who was quite close to her. The wedding photo displays a smiling bride and a mild-looking serious young man, who starts to show the first signs of being overweight.

Eugen Tauszk and Anna Jelinek, wedding photo, 1923

The newlyweds lived for a while in a small rented apartment, Father soon became vice-manager of the bank, but did not want to stay put in the backwater of such a minor-league bank of a provincial town. Within a year and a half Anna (called Annushka by her spouse) had a spontaneous abortion and shortly afterwards they did move to the neighboring Timisoara. This was a thriving commercial and industrial city of about 100 thousand inhabitants, and Father became a procurist at the largest local banking institute, the Credit Bank of Timisoara. My parents had a good life in Timisoara, Father renewed his old friendship ties with Táti Ligeti and Bandi Steinbach. They also got close to other people, the Borgida brothers became lifelong friends. On 13 July 1926 a baby boy made its appearance, called Edward (Eddy for us, Ed for his American family and friends) after his paternal grandfather.

Mother's uncle Jozsi Jellinek, became a rich man after the war, sometimes in the mid-twenties he acquired a local banking institution in Arad, and now he invited my father to join the management. In 1928, my parents moved to Arad, and Father became the acting manager of the Savings Bank of the Arad County. For a year or so they stayed in a rental apartment, and the second child, Henry Carol (called after the maternal grandfather and the maternal great-uncle) was born on February 18, 1929 (that was me). Soon after, the dowry of my mother was put to good use, they purchased the house on No. 1 Stroescu Street, the house which was to become for the next 13 years our much-loved home.

The family House, Stroescu St. no. 1, Arad

At the bank Father worked closely with the general manager, Mr. Gyula Fodor, and upon his retirement in 1935, he became the CEO. The 1930ies were difficult times, there was a world-wide recession and stagnation in business. At my father's bank this was compounded with an agrarian moratorium: farmers were forgiven numerous loans. The Saving Bank of Arad County was primordially an agrarian bank, and had my father not wisely expanded into other business, it would have gone under. As such the bank not only stayed afloat, but managed to be profitable. Father was a respected member of the local citizenry, he was a member of the Scottish Freemason lodge, he was active in the Jewish Community and had friendly and business ties with numerous individuals. He had to travel occasionally, the bank had branches in some neighboring communities, and one even in Battonya, in Hungary. It behooved for such an institution to have friends in high places and the chief of staff of the Romanian king Carol II, Mr. Urdareanu, was on the board of the bank. I am not sure if he was very busy with royal ceremony, but he was a kind of

right-handed assistant to the king and as such, sheltering different business affairs was one of his main concerns. At any rate at least once a year Father had to travel to Bucharest for an audience with Mr. Urdareanu.

Father renewed the bonds with György Szánto, the former class-mate who, now blind, was a budding writer. His wife Adél, had a sister who was married to the lawyer Géza Juhász, and they became the nucleus of a circle of friends. My parents lived an active social life, they travelled occasionally to Budapest for theatrical events or a medical consultation. Father by this time was definitively overweight, more often than not he was well over 100 kilos, and the dieting was a constant, losing fight. He contracted diphtheria and consequentially had myocarditis, believed to have weakened his heart. In addition, he was a heavy smoker, who did not do any kind of physical exercise. My parents enjoyed summer vacations on the Adriatic Sea and one cruise on the Mediterranean. Three times they took us children too on their summer vacation.

My Father: Eugen TAUSK (1894-1962) Part II

The Tausk family, 1936. Anna (left), Ed (back), Henry (front), Eugen (right)

One of my parents' friends was an ardent Zionist. He helped set up an organization called Tzur Shalom, aiming to buy real estate in Palestine. Father did contribute a certain amount, not out of Zionist convictions, more as a service to his friend. The real estate association born out of this action, was dormant for many years. Father was by far no

longer with us, when in Israel, Mother managed to get good financial return from that almost casual investment.

The good family life, a beautiful home, professional success, high social standing, all of the above contributed to make the thirties the best decade of my father's life. At the time he for sure may not have thought so, there were too many worries, the death of his mother, lack of political stability, health problems, etc. but in retrospect there may be no doubt about the above assertion.

The real troubles started in 1938, when a strong nationalistic current in Romania was manifested with Anti-Semitic legislation. The outbreak of the war and territorial adjustments wherein Romania lost about one quarter of its provinces (newly acquired after World War One) brought rabid and violent Anti-Semitism, even a short-lived period of pogroms in the Eastern half of the country. Over the years 1938-1944 Romanian Jews had lost much of their livelihood and fortunes, but luckily, we were spared the deportations which decimated or annihilated the Jewry of most of the European countries.

The bank managed by Father was expropriated, for a while he was jobless, and for a short period of time conscripted into forced labor. Due to his health condition (and probably a considerable bribe) he was declared unfit for physical labor - there can be no doubt about the fact that he was indeed unsuitable: close to his fiftieth year, he was big and fat (at 180 cm height he was well over 100 kg), unused to any kind of exertion or sport, and with a previous history of myocarditis. For a time, he contributed to the creation and management of the Jewish High School (Jewish children were excluded from all educational institution between the years 1940-1944). In the last years of the war, he was working as a book-keeper at a local company, whose owners were family friends.

The end of the war brought a period of apparent tranquility: obviously nobody was prescient enough to anticipate that the liberation by the Soviet troops will bring communist dominance to Eastern Europe. Father, like most other middle-class people thought that it will be business as usual. We exchanged our house, which was given back to us, for a bigger and more elegant home, and Father sued for redress the large Romanian Bank, which in 1940 had swallowed up the institution managed by him. As of January 1, 1946, Father was offered the job of managing the Timisoara branch of the Credit Bank of Romania, one of the country's leading banking institutions. It was a good offer; it conferred the prestigious title of central vice-president and a very good monetary compensation. After some deliberation Father accepted and we moved to Timisoara. My parents renewed the ties formed 20 years ago and gained new friends. A house was purchased, again a cozy and friendly home for the family. Father must have soon gained the confidence of the local financial circles. In the summer of 1947, a large local bank offered him the job of general manager and he accepted it. The odd thing was that the

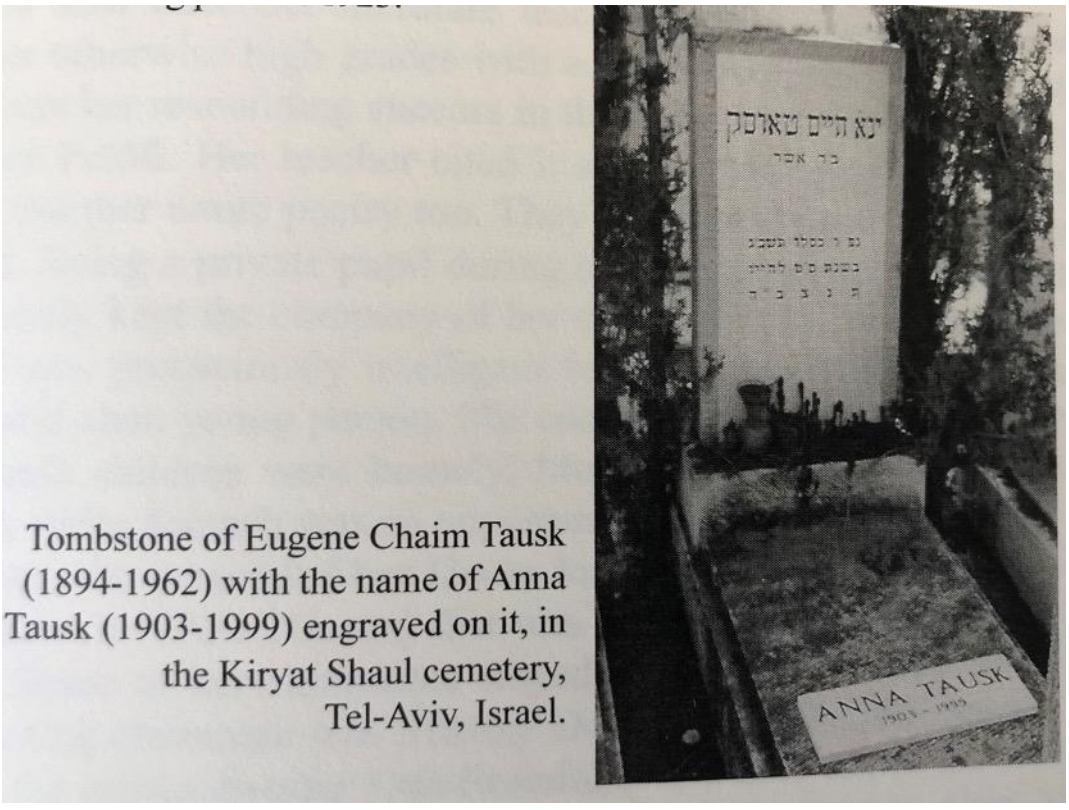
bank was secretly owned by the local organs of the Communist Party, after they took it away from the former German (Nazi) owners. In the summer of 1948, all banks (including the one owned by the Communists) were expropriated and that was forever the end of my father's banking career. He was offered and he accepted the job of head of the book-keeping section of a local shoe-factory. This was already in the midst of the communist take-over: they used the bourgeois elements as long as they were needed, and then discarded them. They even had a name for these people: fellow-travelers and there was nothing one could have done at this stage. After 1948 there was no, or only minimal emigration, and except for Israel, apparently no place where to go.

In 1952 Father was arrested by the economic police, which was almost as feared as the security police. He was detained for almost five weeks and quizzed about traffic in gold coins prior to the year 1948 - when it still was quasi legal. He managed to prove that all the gold he had touched was not his. He had functioned as a kind of trust-hand to various legal and semi-legal businesses at the bank. He was released unharmed, but clearly his job was gone. The fellow-traveler business was still valid, the communist regime gave him another job as book-keeper, but not any more in a responsible position. At this time already key positions in the economy had to be filled with reliable party members.

In 1954, at the age of 60 Father retired from his job. The pension he received was meager and he looked for some additional way of earning money. Selling lotto tickets was an occupation open for retirees, he soon had his own booth and made a meager living of it. In 1957 he had a first myocardial infarction. At the time it was treated with absolute bed rest: for six weeks he was not allowed get up from the bed. Given the fact that the heart attack was diagnosed at home, with the help of a portable E.C.G. machine, father was bedridden at home. In 1959 he started to complain again of rectal bleeding - as he did years before, when he was diagnosed to have hemorrhoids. This time unfortunately there was a long delay in a positive diagnosis - it took over 3 months to find out that he has rectal cancer. Up to this day I blame myself, that as a surgeon I was not more aggressive in asking for a rectoscopy and satisfied myself with clinical examinations (done by very competent internists) and an inconclusive X-ray examination. I also feel guilty about the fact that I let him be operated by my former professor of surgery: he was busy testing candidates for specialty examinations (including myself) and this created another unnecessary delay. At surgery an inoperable cancer was found and 2 months later he needed a colostomy. I asked and received some chemotherapy drugs from uncle Joseph in Paris, and Father was also enrolled in an experimental program of cancer treatment. During this hospital stay he had a second myocardial infarction. Apparently, none of the treatments had any beneficial effect. By this time, he had already given up his lotto-job, and spent his time at home, reading or trying to compile a comprehensive list of Latin proverbs.

We had received our passports to emigrate to Israel in June 1961. Father was quite sick at the time, being in pain and having difficulties walking. We arrived to Vienna on June 29, and in the same evening he was taken to a local hospital and emergency surgery was performed. He stayed over three weeks in that hospital, very concerned that Vicza and myself, we were sent ahead to Israel by the Jewish Agency people. On July the 25th when he arrived by plane to Israel, he was taken straight to the Jaffo Governmental hospital, where I was already working. It was a tearful reunion, one of the few happy occasions in the last stage of his life. For the next year and a half, he was in and out of hospitals, receiving radiation therapy, which in the best case just slowed down the progression of cancer. He and my mother stayed in an immigration camp, where there were only minimal amenities, and his few joyous moments were when on weekends Ed and myself came to see him. His last weeks were marked by almost constant pain, and he had respite only when Mother gave him the pain-killer injections.

Father passed away on December 2, 1962, and was buried in the Kiryat Shaul cemetery, close to Tel Aviv.



Tombstone of Eugene Chaim Tausk (1894-1962) with the name of Anna Tausk (1903-1999) engraved on it, in the Kiryat Shaul cemetery, Tel-Aviv, Israel.

The above chronology of my father is a matter-of-fact and bare listing. It does not give an idea of his character and personality. Unfortunately, I have difficulties describing my father in a tangible way. First of all, there is the distance in time - he is dead for over 36 years. Secondly, he was a reticent man, not given to express himself emotionally. Our relation was based on non-critical respect and filial love on my part and protective but

non-communicative tenderness on his part. I also never managed to convey my feelings to him. He never talked to me about the emotional aspects of his life, be it before or after his marriage. Father was extremely strait-laced, I never heard him curse or use foul language, and we, the children were reprimanded for usage of even the mildest forms of swearing (I was once scolded for using the Hungarian invective "fene", which means a bad disease, something like anthrax). Sex was never discussed, and I do remember the embarrassed silence when once Gyurka Szánto inquired in our presence about a lady, if there is truth to the rumor that she is whoring around.

Father was well-educated, far better then the parents of my class-mates; he spoke beautiful German, a little bit of French (he enjoyed reading French literature too), and even knew a smattering of English. His favorite book was "Buddenbrooks" by Thomas Mann. He had a good ear for music, an excellent musical memory (inherited by Ed) and enjoyed playing the piano. In matters of art, he was not knowledgeable, he probably did visit as a youngster the art museums of Vienna, but had no later interest in the subject. He had a religious and traditional upbringing, but never insisted on keeping Jewish rituals at home. He fasted on Yom Kippur, but accepted the fact that there was cooking on that day in our home and Mother, as well as often the children, did not fast. He had a permanent seat in the synagogue, it was in the first row, but not in the center. He used a prayer shawl on the High Holidays, and whenever he went to Friday and Saturday morning services - but this was not a routine. He did not even own tefilin. Father was able to say all the usual Saturday and High Holiday prayers, he read the text in the prayer book, but he did not know modern Hebrew. He sang with us the "Maoz Tzur" on Channuka playing the tune on the piano. We never had a "Seder" in our home, we were always invited to a former colleague of Grandfather Tauszk, a retired teacher, Uncle Théti. The above notwithstanding, he had strong feelings about Jewishness: in the late 1950s Ed was deeply involved in a love affair with an attractive blonde. The problem was that she was gentile, a German lady. Father emphatically decreed that Ed can't marry her and he obeyed.

Father always acted timely and valued punctuality. He liked to laugh; a good joke always improved his mood. He was often impatient and short-tempered, I frequently heard him flare up at work or at home, bawling at the subalterns or family members who behaved or acted stupidly. Occasionally he even hit the table with his fist. Luckily the outbursts were short-lived, followed by mellower tones. In the days of my childhood, corporeal punishment was an accepted way of disciplining and educating the off-springs. Father hit me only once, when I kicked Ed in the belly, just after he was suspected (mistakenly) to have an appendicitis. His parental concern often limited our freedom: we had to be at home on time (even as adults he always queried: when will you be home?), he had to know where we are going, what we are doing etc. If we were late, or if he did not know our whereabouts he became extremely upset, nervous and anxious. To stay together as a family was very important for Father. One of the reasons that Ed had

returned home from his trip to Budapest (it had coincided with the revolution of 1956, and he could have gone to the West) was that he knew how painful the separation would have been to Father.

Father, as mentioned above, was always overweight, despite the fact that he was not a big eater, and extremely moderate with alcohol: one or two glasses of wine, and only with guests, never at the family table. He fought most of his adult life a losing battle with the figures of the scale. He was a heavy smoker, at least one pack a day, and despite repeated attempts, was never able to kick the habit. He was indifferent to sartorial urbanity, his clothing was poorly tailored and ill worn, his shoes polished but never elegant. I had learned from him how to tie a necktie, but it was not a successful knot. He was almost completely bald, but the few wisps of hair in the back and above the ears were always untidy. Father invariably dressed in a conservative manner, wore even on hot summer days a straw hat, and always walked with a cane. Ed seems to bear more of a facial and corporeal resemblance to him than myself. I definitively inherited the form of his hands and his teeth: he had early on chronic gingivitis, which in his days was not properly treated and by the age of 55 he became toothless, wearing dental prothesis. He was not myopic, however he wore eyeglasses because of severe astigmatism. He did not like to be photographed, and thus we have few images of him on paper: luckily some of the photos are good and they convey an authentic view of his appearance.