

Ella Antal



This is a picture of my paternal grandmother, Ella Antal, nee Kohn. The photo was taken in Budapest in 1943. Grandmother Ella was from Szekesfehervar. I think she might have met my grandfather, Jozsef Antal, there. My grandmother was a housewife. Two children were born: my father and his younger brother, and she raised them. Whether my grandfather was religious, I don't know, but the two of them, my grandfather and grandmother, observed holidays, I think; at least, they kept the fast [on Yom Kippur]. Perhaps they even went to the synagogue, but I'm not sure about that. They didn't tell me about it because my father had converted to Christianity. It's certain

that my father was already non-religious. My grandmother kept the fasts even after the war, and there were those kinds of meals at holidays. As far as I know, I knew matzah balls from there. When I grew older, after the war, I fasted with her in solidarity, despite the fact that we had already converted. And I think she was kosher at first, because it seemed as if she cooked things separately, but then she may have put up with the fact that it was not like that in our house. After my grandfather's death, she moved to our place and lived with us until her death. She died at the beginning of the 1950s, and she was around 80 years old. Before the war she had a separate room, but she didn't have one afterwards, she had only a small vestibule because our flat had been bombed. As a doctor, my father got an official residence room in Rokus hospital. There we were, the four of us and grandmother in the vestibule on a divan-bed. It was pretty hard for all of us, living in the one-bedroom apartment. Obviously there was tension because there wasn't a very good relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. My mother was terribly troubled by grandmother's having moved in, and that grandma always observed what she was doing, and what kind of company she kept.