

Vasile Grunea At A Carnival Ball On Purim



This photo was taken in the Redut hall in Brasso on Purim. This was originally a big concert and dance hall, where two traditional carnival balls, one for adults and one for children, were organized. I was photographed at one of these balls. The photo was taken around 1933. I was dressed as a shoemaker. My mother made this dress, but it couldn't have been such a big deal because I am dressed in everyday clothes with a so-called 'csiszlik' hat on my head. We called csiszlik badly behaved apprentices, and we had a saying, 'You are behaving like a csiszlik'. The girl next to me

was called Zsuzsa Springer, I think, she was a friend of mine by that time. She is wearing a servant's dress, the kind that servants serving in better-off families wore. We didn't have to perform anything, but we still dressed up in fancy dresses and danced. Our mums brought raspberry-juice and that's what we drank. We also had cakes. Our mothers were sitting alongside the wall and made sure that nothing would happen to the children. The adults weren't dressed up, they had their own Purim ball, but I'm not sure if they dressed in fancy dresses for that either. I was circumcised and I had my bar mitzvah as well. I went to preparatory classes to a bocher who studied in yeshivah - rabbis didn't deal with such trifles at the time. There was no yeshivah in Brasso, but there were always yeshivah bocherim who came to teach before finishing the yeshivah. The bocher taught me two basic things: one was the prayer that one has to recite before putting on the phylacteries and the prayer shawl. A boy puts on the phylacteries and tallit for the first time in his life on his bar mitzvah and from then on he's supposed to put them on every single morning. The other thing he taught me was the pericope [weekly Torah portion], which falls on the Saturday when the bar mitzvah is held. One learns it basically by heart to be able to recite it smoothly in the synagogue. After the ceremony a tikkun, or celebration, is organized at home or in the entrance-hall of the synagogue. I had my bar mitzvah in November; at that time only the small hall behind the main hall of the synagogue was heated in the winter and I recited what I had to at the table there. Then we invited home my best Jewish friends and they brought presents, a fountain-pen, a propelling pencil, and mostly books, just like on a birthday. And there were cakes, of course. My sister didn't have a bat mitzvah, in the Galut in Brasso it wasn't a custom to hold a bat mitzvah.