

Rachel Schonfeld With Mira Cotin And Ana Schwartz



This photograph was taken in 1940 in Bucharest, in front of our house on Turbinei Street. From left to right: my sister, Mira Cotin [nee Mizrahy], my maternal grandmother, Rachel Schonfeld [nee Friedman], and a distant relative, Ana Schwartz.

My maternal grandmother was born in 1865, during the reign of Cuza, in Bucharest. She witnessed the instauration of the monarchy, she lived under the rule of all the four kings and she even had the 'luck' to catch the beginnings of the 'people's rule.' As a young lady, she - and other girls from 'respectable families' - had the privilege to collect money for the erection of the Romanian Athenaeum, standing in the Cismigiu Garden, with a basket of flowers in her hand: 'Donate one leu, just one leu, for the stately Athenaeum!' She was a contemporary and a friend of Marioara Ventura, the famous Romanian actress. She had also met her mother. Stimulated by her entourage, she studied drama and the piano. I remember her as a short, neat, stylish old woman with a bright face who worked hard - a mistress of crochet, among other things; this is how she remained until the very last day of her life. She died at the age of 89. Endowed with an uncommon memory, she used to recite to us poems by Eminescu with an amazing freshness.

My sister was born in 1923 in Bucharest. She was a quiet child and a pupil loved and respected by her schoolmates. In college, my sister kept on being a good student and she became a respected physician. She was an obstetrician in the first 10-12 years, and then she changed her specialization after she left the country, becoming a good internist.