

Kati Andai's Father Lajos Erdos



My father. When he was 21 years old, he got into the postal service and became a postal official. He was the deputy chief cashier in the control cash-desk of a large post office. As a worker at the post office, he was a government official with every benefit which that entailed. He got a photo identity card and we could travel gratis by train. We could receive something like twenty parcels a year, gratis. In those times the postal service had a private health-fund with private surgery, and it had a private hospital with very good doctors. As a government official, had some other 'little' advantages such as the fact that he was creditable: we used to buy absolutely everything with

easy repayments. Daddy would get his salary, pay everything, we wouldn't have a buck again, and then everything started again from the beginning. But we got everything on credit and easy repayments, because the postal job was such a good guarantee. Still, we lived simply. My father brought home everything from the Orvosi Hetilap [Medical Weekly] to the Kerteszek Lapja [Gardeners' Paper], there was the literary periodical, Mult es Jovo [Past and Future, a Jewish periodical], Egyenloseg [Equality, Jewish weekly], Nyugat [West, modern literary periodical]. The morning's paper was the Pesti Naplo, after lunch the Est, and in the afternoon there was the Magyarorszag. He brought that home, too. My mother read everything from horticultural papers to medical ones, my father didn't. He mostly read the Jewish ones. My father read only in Hungarian - he wasn't a very talented linguist - and loved classical things very much, such as Ancient Greek and Latin. He knew Ancient Greek from school. But he read Hungarian and German classics as well. Unfortunately, when it came to light in 1925 that a little tubercular center remained from my mother's pneumonia, he had to sell his hundred volumes of Jokai [one of the most famous Hungarian romantic prose-writers]. My mother read everything, even in German. Dr. Norbert Langer had a rental library on Andrassy Street, we were registered there and we rented books from there. My father also bought books but not as many as he would have liked.