

Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger With Her Grandmother



This picture features my cousin Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger, to whom I was related through my great-grandfather Abraham Schrager. She's with her grandmother, who was also a Schrager. The grandmother's house was in a traditionally Jewish neighbourhood of Czernowitz. Selma was 15 when she was deported. The picture was taken before the deportation. We found it when we returned from deportation. It was lying on the floor of our house, together with many other things. Selma's mother was in the piano business: she bought, sold and mended pianos.

Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger lived in my uncle's house. Eisinger was her father's name and Meerbaum was the name of her mother's second husband. She was my cousin too; we were related through my great-grandfather, Abraham Schrager. Selma and her parents weren't deported with us. They stayed home for an extra year. But they were eventually taken with the second wave, in 1942. They got to the Mihailovca camp, across the River Bug. Selma caught typhus and died on 16th December 1942, at the age of 18. After her death they discovered she had kept a diary, like Anna Frank. My cousin, Silvia, who lives in Israel, sent me an article published in an Israeli newspaper, pointing out that the publishing of the diary was 'due to Teacher Hersch Segal, who discovered her'.

It's an article in German which claims that Selma was related to Paul Celan. The article renders a fragment of Selma's diary, written in German, 'Spring. The trees are only now naked, and every bush is a sweet whisper, like the first announcement of the new joy, and swallows will return tomorrow too'.