

In Front Of Markus Polak's Store In Kokava Nad Rimavicou



This photograph was taken around 1938 - 1939, in Kokava nad Rimavicou. My grandfather Markus Polak is third from the left, my mother, Klara Engelova, is standing on the left, first on the left is Aunt Melania, and standing beside her is my grandmother Anna Polakova.

My grandfather in Kokava had a store with various goods, mixed goods as it was called back then. Their standard of living was relatively bearable, decent for the times. They didn't have problems making a living.

My grandparents' house in Kokava was one-story, and relatively large. It had a quite large commercial area. I'd say that it was around 15 by 10 meters, and of that 60 percent was a store and storage space. My grandparents' house had four rooms. We lived in it after the war. It was their second house, because in 1911 Kokava burned down, and so my grandparents built this house between the years 1918 and 1920.

In the Polak family, the oldest of my mother's siblings was Eugen, who was probably born in 1894. He died right after World War I, in 1922, of bone tuberculosis. He was a more or less active writer; a poetry collection of his has been found. The next in line was Melania, who was born in 1896; they killed her in the Auschwitz concentration camp in 1944. Next was Ernest, who was born in 1902. He was a pharmacist, and died in a concentration camp. In 1904 my mother was born, then there was another brother of hers, Pavel, who was probably born in 1906, and was a businessman. He died in 1935 I think, of quick pneumonia. The youngest was Edita. Born in 1910, she perished in a concentration camp.