

Michal Maud Beer And Her Sister Karmela Ben Dom



This is a picture of me, Michal Maud Beer, née Stecklmacherova, and my sister Karmela Ben Dom, née Stecklmacherova. I'm sitting on the left and my little sister is beside me. The picture was taken in Prostejov in 1937.

My sister and I didn't enjoy much from the prewar period. My sister was still very small when the anti-Jewish laws began coming into force.

I was born in 1929 in Prostejov, which used to be called "The Jerusalem of Hana." There were "Jewish streets" in the center of town, the way it is in many European towns, which is a sign that our people lived in the town since its beginnings. From early childhood I was aware that we were Jews, even though my family wasn't religious. My parents were Zionists. Father and Grandpa were members of the Zionist organization B'nai Brith, and Mother and Grandma were in WIZO. I remember the Jewish holidays well. One of my first books was "Bible Stories" by Joachim Prinz; that's why I knew and had feelings for the Bible and Israel from earliest childhood.

At the age of four, I began exercising in the Jewish gymnastics organization Maccabi. At the girls' elementary school in Komenskeho Street, I was the only Jewish girl in my class. I differed from my classmates because of my name, and also in that we spoke German at home. Most of the girls were fair-haired, while I was dark. Our Grade 1 teacher, Mrs. Tihelkova, was probably taken aback when to the question what I wanted to be, I replied "A gardener in Palestine."