

Magdalena Berger With Friends



This is me with some friends -- Dora Lalošević, Vera Adler and Vjera -- at the King Petra canal near Sombor in the summer of 1943. At the time this territory was occupied by the Hungarians. The authorities did not expel or kill the Jews in Hungary or in the occupied zone until March 1944, when the Hungarian fascists took over. Before that the Jews were able to move around freely but had to perform forced labor. After the fascist takeover, the majority of the Jews were deported and killed in various concentration camps. When the Jews of Sombor were captured and held hostage, my father put up one million of the required two million Hungarian pengo ransom to have the Jews released. My stepmother and I were deported to Austria, where we were held in a labor camp. In 1944, while in the camp, my stepmother gave birth to a baby girl. I was given the honor of naming the baby and I called her Mira Ruth Grossberger. As an infant she was quite ill and my stepmother wanted her to have two names to protect her from death. We were liberated on the 8 May 1945 and immediately left Austria. We returned to Sombor, where we learned that my father had been killed on May 2, 1944, in Auschwitz.