

Saul Bertram



This is a picture of my father Saul Bertram. It was probably taken for registration or some documents in Cracow in 1939 or 1940. I found it at the Jewish Historical Institute. It's the last picture of my father.

All the men in the family wore head coverings. Only my father wore a hat; all the others wore yarmulkas. Today they're round, but then they were different - these forage caps like the army wore. Usually they were black, sometimes dark blue. There weren't any others, round ones. These forage caps were in place of yarmulkas. My dad didn't wear the gabardine [caftan] and he didn't

wear the streimel. Only my grandfathers wore the streimel. They had gabardines too, but they didn't have side locks, just beards. Dad didn't have a beard, he didn't have side locks; he shaved. My family was Ashkenazi Jews, because we're all Ashkenazim here in Poland. And the ones who used to wear the streimel, they were Hasidim. My father dressed in the European fashion too. It was when my father went to Belgium that he stopped wearing the gabardine

In our family no one belonged to any political party. Dad told me never to belong to any political party. I once talked to a man who said: 'A man who doesn't belong to any party is worth nothing.' But I think that it's best not to get mixed up in things like that and to be objective. And observe from a distance, which is the best system. The communist system had its pros and cons, you see, and the present system has its different pros and different cons. There's no such thing as the ideal system.