

Jolan Moskovits With Relatives



This picture was taken in Kolozsvár in 1941. The first one from the left is my mother Jolan Moskovits. The other two people are the wife of her cousin Lajos Herskovits, Jolan and their daughter Agi.

I think Uncle Lajos took the picture because he had a camera and I know he used to take lots of pictures. They lived in Kolozsvár, where he was a dentist.

My mother and Agi's father were cousins, since their parents, my and Agi's grandmother were sisters. They didn't come home from deportation, only Lajos did. He then wrote a booklet about the Jews from Királydáróc, where the grandparents were originally from.

In 1940, everybody was happy that the Hungarians came in. My mother had never really managed to learn proper Romanian; she graduated from a Hungarian school.

This change was received with great joy. The first anti-Jewish laws in Romania were adopted in 1942 or 1943, and not right away; a series of disappointments came because though it was fine we had this [Hungarian authority once again], the other aspects weren't quite in our favor.

There were young fellows who, when coming across long-bearded elderly Jews, pulled their beards, made all kinds of remarks and generally made fun of them.

The Germans came into Marosvasarhely on, or around, 19th March 1944. That year school ended very early and then everything happened very rapidly.

Early in April I was still attending the school, and my father was still teaching, when all the schools had to officially end the year simultaneously.

Early in 1944, when the law regarding the obligation to wear the yellow star came into force, the first unofficial news came, that Jews would all be gathered and taken to Transdanubia for agricultural work, but without separating the families. This was the news.

Furthermore, we would only be allowed to take luggage of a certain weight. Everybody began looking for or making backpacks to have something they could pack their things in, so we were somewhat prepared.

Then the official notification came on banners saying we had to be ready by 3rd May with packs of a certain weight, including spare clothes and food, because they would come to take us away.

We arrived at Auschwitz at the end of May. My mother had been operated on the year before, and she had a large scar that was quite obvious.

In addition she began to go grey quite early, although she was only 48, and she had even begun dyeing her hair at home, before the deportation. We had our hair cut, and as it began to grow back her grey hair began to appear.

The grey hair and the scar, these were good reasons to be sent to the gas chamber, so we tried to hide away from these selections. As soon as we heard one would take place, we hid somewhere, anywhere we could. This went on until October.

In early October there were very few of us left in the camp, as many had perished or had been taken to work. Those who hadn't been taken to work had been sent to the gas chambers.

We had no opportunity to hide, and by then one could never know when these selections would take place. On 6th October they opened the doors of the two facing blocks, a cordon of German soldiers was formed and they began to select people and sent them out one by one.

Those who had been accepted were sent to the other block, otherwise they were taken elsewhere. That's how we got separated because I had been found young and strong enough to work. Those found unfit to work were immediately taken away, of course.

Then I knew for sure - they didn't tell us, but I already knew - that I would be separated from her forever, for she was taken to the gas chamber. Two days later, on 8th October it would have been her 48th birthday.