

Roza Star



This is a picture of my cousin Roza, she was a daughter of my mother's sister, Berta. My mother had also a brother, Jozef and another sister, Maria, but they were not so well off as Berta who emigrated to Germany with her husband. This picture could have been taken in Cologne where Berta's family lived before the war. Roza is probably just over 20 years old in this picture. I remember Roza very well, she used to come to Rzeszow before the war, when her grandmother was still alive. She was already making a career. I got this picture from Roza's brother, Erich who lived in London. I met him there in 1969 when I went to visit my brother, Zygmunt. My mother's sister Berta got married in Rzeszow, which was in Austria at that time. So there was this Sternszus family in Rzeszow, a very respectable family, elegant, assimilated - of course Germanized. And one

of those Sternuszuses married Berta out of great love. They later changed their name to Star. They settled in Germany, in Cologne on the River Rhein, and they opened a business there, just like the one they had in Rzeszow, that is they purchased dairy products from farmers in the area. They were quite successful. Berta had three sons. I remember one of them was named Erich. She also had a daughter called Roza. And this daughter, Roza Star, who was a pianist and a soprano, was employed at the theater in Cologne and she was a soloist there. She was very popular, but she didn't get married. There was a concentration camp near Lodz, Chelmno. They deported them all there and Roza died there with her theater troupe. I remember how she told me about how she used to go to Germany, to her sister in Cologne, to recover after some illness. She was thrilled with how the Germans got along with Jews. She said these parties which Aunt Berta threw for New Year's and other German national holidays were simply delightful. So much that for New Year's my mother received a twig of blooming lilacs from her German friends. And Mother used to tell me this at the beginning of this century, that is this century which has now ended. It could have been?. Well, before World War I. Yes. So Mother used to tell me how Jews were respected there, how they were considered to be civilized people. She was delighted with this and when they were walking her to the station, when she was going back home, they were trying to convince her to sell everything here and to emigrate. It's unbelievable how that happened later, where did it come from?