

Paulina Glaser



This is a picture of my sister Paulina. It was taken before the war in Bielsko where we lived. I do not know who took it, when or why. Paulina was born in 1912, so she must be in her 20s in that photograph. It was given to me in 1947 by her friend, Rauchman, whom I met during my visit to Bielsko. Thanks to her I have my only photograph of my sister. Rauchman and my sister were together on that photograph, but she split it in half then and gave me only the part with my sister on. When she gave me that photo, I knew that my sister was dead. I do not have any pictures of my parents or my brother. My parents had three children: me, my older brother Maksymilian, and my sister Paulina, who was the eldest of us. My sister was eleven years older than me, and my brother nine. I remember that my brother was very tall, slim, with a small moustache. My sister of medium height. I was the smallest. My sister and brother went to the German gymnasium in Bielsko, with German the language of instruction. We didn't read too much at home, but I remember that my brother and sister did - they were always studying. I remember that my sister gave private French lessons. She didn't have another job, but I think she was looking. My sister had some fiance who she was supposed to be marrying, but it went on and on so long, and that was the end. But I don't know what exactly happened between them, I only know that until the war she kept in close touch with him. We fled Bielsko after the war broke out. We took what we could take, but my father's sewing machine stayed in the basement. And my sister went there for it. And she brought that machine back, how, I don't know, but that was in 1940. After that Father sewed again for a short time in Tarnow where my parents decided that we should move. I got a summons from the ?Arbeitsamt? [Ger.: Labor Office], what they called the labor office - as a 17-year-old lad. That was 1940. I was summoned to work. I didn't know what work - it turned out to be to the Pustkow labor camp. My parents and my brother and sister had gone to the ghetto in Tarnow. At that time we were often sent to Cracow in this big truck. We would take flour from the mill on Wieczysta Street, and as Tarnow was on route, they let us go to the ghetto. I went into the ghetto once on a pass. I was there for a very short time. I don't know how it happened - they granted my request; not only mine but other people's too. And so they left us in the ghetto for a few hours. The SS-men in the convoy were evidently understanding like that. I don't remember what they were called, but they supervised the storehouses that we worked in at Pustkow. They left me in the ghetto, I remember that as if it were yesterday. They knew I wouldn't escape from there. Well, how would I escape? How many hours I was there I don't know, but it didn't last very long at all. But it meant that I met my parents there, and we exchanged a few words. We despaired and that was it. I really didn't expect it all to be over that quickly and that I would never see them again. That was the last time I saw my parents and my sister. I didn't know about the liquidation of the ghetto when I was in the camp. I didn't know. Only afterwards, after the war, I found out.