

The Milch Family



This family photograph was taken around 1936 in Trnava. The bottom row, left to right; my cousin Marta Reich, I, Gertrúda Milchová, my father Eugen Milch, my sister Erika Milch, my cousin Katka Reich, my uncle Salamon Reich, and the man squatting down is my uncle Alexander Wollitzer. The dog that he's holding belongs to Uncle Salamon. In the upper row, from right to left: my mother's brothers Lajo Grün and Mikulas Grün, her sister Sari Grün, another brother, Herman (Minko) Grün, I don't know the name of the young lady beside him, nor the next man, then there's my mother's oldest sister Margita Reich, and my mother, Erna Milch. The Grüns had eleven children. Laci and Minko [Herman] were fraternal twins. Minko had dark hair and was tall, while Lajko was blond and had a shorter, stocky build. Lajo apprenticed in the textile industry. Minko studied law, and graduated with honors. My grandfather was very proud of him. After graduating, Minko got a job at a law office in Vrútky. He worked as an articled clerk. He had a very romantic nature, and fell in love with his boss's wife. She was butt-ugly, and it suited her that such a good-looking young person was after her. He was dead serious, and tried to convince her to get divorced. She laughed at him, of course. And he, instead of going home and crying about it, talking about it to his family, he went and jumped in front of a train. He committed suicide. That was sometime between 1933 and 1934. Lajko [Ludvik] worked in a textile store in Trnava. He was a very good dancer, and liked music. I don't know much about him. He got married, but that was already when times were bad; I've got this impression that they deported him. Hugo finished school, and worked as an agronomist. He studied in Budapest, because he was a soldier during the time of Austro-Hungary. He got married and worked as a farm administrator in Liptovsky Peter. He had two beautiful daughters, Juditka [Judit] and Esterka [Ester]. His wife's name was Blanka, she wasn't pretty, but was very wise. Hugo's whole family died in the Holocaust. Margit got married in Trnava, to a man named Reich. She had two girls ? Katka and Marta. A big tragedy happened there, because they deported the two girls, but their parents remained, because my uncle, Salamon Reich, was a farmer and they granted him an exception. On the advice of a Protestant priest, they had themselves christened. After the war they cancelled it and returned to the Jewish community. Salamon and Margita survived, they had friends that hid them. For days and days on end, Margita

would go to the train station to wait for the girls. It was only later that she found out that they hadn't survived. It was a terrible shock for her. After the war, Uncle Reich worked as a butcher. He was still working long past retirement age. They lived in Galanta for some time, but finally bought a co-op apartment in Piestany. They died of old age. First my aunt, then my uncle. Laci studied electrical engineering in Prague, but when he finished, that time of crisis began, and he left for France. There he worked in a factory, but not as an engineer, as just a normal worker. He learned to speak French well, and saw the world. Then he returned, and got a job as an engineer in a factory in Bytca. He married Elza Weiner, the sister of the painter Weiner. Laci and his wife were very leftist-oriented. They weren't members of any party, but were just members of the Union of Friends of the Soviet Union. Well, and when the fascist Slovak State was created, they wanted to arrest his wife; at that time they had a seven or eight-year-old little girl. Vierka [Viera] was her name. My uncle said: ?You know what, why don't you take me, and let her stay with the kid!? They agreed. They jailed him in Ilava, and he went to Lublin with the first deportations. He even sent us one note and also bequeathed us something. I know that he tried to escape and they shot him. Elza and Vierka held on until 1944, when they left for Bratislava, and were caught in a raid and deported. They didn't survive. Mariska got married and moved to Sastín, and was the only one in my family to remain religious. She married Mr. Rudolf Ehrenreich. The Ehrenreich family was one very Orthodox and wealthy family. They had two children, the son was named after him, Rudko [Rudolf]. I don't remember the girl. They were in the textile, haberdashery business. They all died. Piroshka Wollitzer's name was Priska, but everyone in the family called her Piroshka. Mr. Wollitzer was in the coal business. They lived in Trnava, and had a son, Ivan. All three died. I've got to mention one thing, that in adulthood the Grün girls worked in the Trnava distillery as clerks. My mother was the first, then Piroshka worked there, and also Irena. The lady that owned it didn't have children, and they became very fond of the girls and supported them. Well, and when the youngest, Mikulas, finished business academy, Grandpa went to see them, that he's got a new candidate for them. And they said; ?We don't take men, as there's the danger that they'll learn to drink here.? So then he found a job in Bratislava. Sárka got married to Mr. Kohn who lived in Banská Stiavnice. Mr. Kohn was a widower and already had a son. Sárka and her husband were in the uprising. They shot them in Kremnicka. Mr. Kohn's son survived, but I don't know anything about him. Irena married Mr. Singer from Novy Ban. They didn't have children. They were shot along with the Kohns in Kremnicka. The youngest, Mikulas, worked as a clerk in Bratislava. His first salary was 600 crowns. At first he lived with us. Here he found a wife, Jenny, they got married and had a daughter, Darina. Miki and Jenny and Darina moved away to Israel in 1948. He worked there all his life as a gas station attendant. Jenny was at home. Darina was later diagnosed with schizophrenia, which can't be cured with any medicines, but can be treated. She even worked as a government clerk. When Miki died in 1979, contact with Jenny and Darina cooled off completely, because we didn't like that Jenny. She wasn't a good wife for him.