

Edita Weissova At Family Shop In Prievidza



This is my mother, Edita, in front of the shop of my grandmother Irma Weissova. My mother was born in Prievidza in 1918. She was one of seven children. Her father, Adolf Weiss, died in a traffic accident in a horse carriage when she was 2. Most of my grandmother's children survived World War II. Her oldest son, Vojtech, was a lawyer. Before the war, he went with his brothers to Tanger, Morocco. They were businessmen in some international trading zone. The second son, Alexander, spent the war years in Indochina and Saigon, Vietnam. Edmund and Ladislav were in Morocco when the war broke out in Europe. You could say that their business saved their lives. By working abroad, they avoided deportations and the Holocaust. After liberation, Ladislav came back as an enthusiastic builder of Czechoslovakia. Nevertheless, he was persecuted, fired from his work, and forced to find a job as an unskilled worker. After some time, he was rehabilitated. Today he lives in Prague and is married to a woman who is not Jewish. Another son, Tibor, worked as a sales representative for a company in Slovakia. He was deported from Zilina and died in Auschwitz. My parents, grandmother and my Aunt Josefína all survived in hiding. My father, Tibor Silberstein, was born in Kremnica in 1914. He was a businessman. During World War II, he also was in the anti-fascist resistance. I was born in 1949 in Kosice. I learned I was Jewish when I was 6 and at school for the first time. A girl mocked me for being a Jew. I had no idea what it meant and why she was making fun of me. I only understood that it was some mockery. I reacted very simply and physically attacked her, not driven by the meaning of an insult at all. I probably beat her and she complained at home. When the case was examined, since her parents came to school complaining that I had hurt their daughter, the teacher had to examine the origin of the conflict. I told her exactly how it all had started. I learned for the first time that there is something called Jewry and Jew. There was no expression of the Jewish religion in our family. I married a Jewish girl, but not because she was Jewish. I did not even know at first. I found out about her origin later, when we were dating. Actually, she is Jewish because her mother is Jewish; her father was not Jewish. As I married a Jewish woman from a family where this tradition was much stronger, I learned much more about the Jewish religion than in my own. Our daughter, Linda, was born in 1977.