

## The Paszternak Siblings On A Trip



This picture must be from some trip. From the left: Viliam Schaffer, the husband of my aunt Alzbeta Schafferova, nee Paszternak, Aunt Ilona Kleinova, nee Paszternak, uncle Koloman Paszternak, Aunt Alzbeta, Mr. Klein, the husband of Aunt Ilona and my aunt Marie Paszternak. The photo was taken somewhere in Slovakia in the 1930s. My mom came from a large, religious family and had nine brothers and sisters - Izidor, the oldest, Serena, Koloman, Irma, Charlota, Ilona, Alzbeta, Mikulas, Marie. Most of her siblings lived in various places in Slovakia and were far less religious than their parents. Koloman worked in a bank. He was a frivolous person who sometimes had financial worries. He married an extremely talkative woman called Erzi, with whom he had a son, Pista, my cousin. Pista went to a Slovak high school and, during the war, was sent to a labor camp in Hungary, from where he was then transported to a concentration camp. On the train journey, the guards made it be known that the prisoners were to be shot at the camp. Three of them escaped, including Pista. He got as far as Budapest, where he somehow managed to get a German uniform, in which he was later caught by the Russians who wanted to shoot him. He explained to them that he was a Jew who was wearing the uniform, as he had just escaped. As the officer who was interrogating him had a Jewish orderly, he got Pista to sing a Hebrew prayer to him to see if he really was a Jew. Pista had a beautiful voice and, what's more, came from a Jewish family, so he broke out in song, which saved his life. Afterwards, he lived in Hungary under the Hungarian name Perenyik and died at the age of about 70. He had one son. Aunt Alzbeta was my favorite aunt. Before getting married, she graduated from a commercial high school. She worked and lived with us in Bratislava, as we had a large apartment there at the time. She then married a Jewish traveling salesman called Viliam Schaffer. Her husband wasn't home very often, due to the nature of his job, so she used to stay at our place. I loved her very much and was very close to her. She was very witty. I knew my mom's side of the family the most. Dad's sister, Aunt Hermina, was once staying over at our place when Aunt Alzbeta came along. When dad brought her in, I ran up to her with joy, as I always did. Afterwards, mom told me off for never greeting Aunt Hermina in the same way. Aunt Alzbeta always had health problems. She loved children and in 1939 became pregnant, but because of the war she didn't want to have a child, so she gave it away. During the war, Alzbeta and her husband were in a camp in Novaky and during the Slovak Uprising they hid out in the mountains. They both survived the war. They didn't have any children later on. Marie never

married, for she was very choosy and never liked anyone enough, which annoyed her sisters. She was a cheerful woman, though. At first she lived in Kosice, later she moved to Ruthenia for work. She perished in Auschwitz. Ilona married and became Mrs. Kleinova, but didn't have any children. She lived in Kosice where she ran a powder and cosmetics factory with her husband. Neither of them survived the Holocaust.