

## Viera Slesingerova And Her Friend Duca Robinsonova On A Trip



This picture was taken by my dad when we were on a trip in the Small Tatras sometime in the 1930s. From the left: my friend Duca Robinsonova, my aunt Marie Paszternak and I. The woman with the bag on the right is my mom Helena Pollakova, nee Paszternak. The circle Duca and I hold, we used to throw and play with. My dad had four weeks off, so we went on vacation. Sometimes we would go to a spa, usually Marianske Lazne, and sometimes my parents went off on their own, leaving me at my grandparents' place in Kosice or with Aunt Hermina in Klatovy. I also went on

trips with mom around Slovakia, traveling to Piestany, Trenčianske Teplice and the Tatras. I made friends with Duca in Zilina and she has remained a friend to this day. Her parents had a house with a garden where we spent a lot of time. She was the same age as me. Duca went through Auschwitz and was liberated in Bergen-Belsen. She remembered waking up in a white bed in hospital and she thought she must be in heaven. She told me that when she returned home, the first person she met was the collaborator who had been watching them when they were caught. So she reported him to the police who took him in but released him a week later. Tibor told me that Duca's nerves were in a bad state. So I invited her to Prague and we lived together in my small apartment until 1950, when I got married. Duca then moved back to Bratislava, but we still meet up to this day. She became a photographer. In the 1960s she was sent by an international agency to Israel to take photographs for a book. The preface was to have been written by Arnost Lustig but, when he emigrated, he hid the text of the preface along with the photos in a wall at his cottage. It was as if the photos had disappeared into thin air. They didn't turn up until after 1989. In the 1990s, the Jewish Museum in Bratislava hosted an exhibition of Duca's photos and the book was finally published under the title 'Walled-in Paintings'.