

Irma Berger



This is my maternal grandmother, Irma Berger. I don't know where and when the photo was taken.

Grandmother Irma was born in Dalj on the Danube in 1874. Her maiden name was Irma Veltman. The Veltmans came from Curug [in Voivodina, called Csurog before 1920]. A few years ago, a man told me that they still call a house in Curug as 'Veltman's house'. One of the Veltmans, Martin Veltman, went to Palestine in 1938. He was a lawyer in Novi Sad. There he became Meir Tuval. For some time Palestine didn't have enough personnel, so they hired ambassadors under contracts and he, too, was hired as an ambassador. During the war he was called Meir Marcika, the representative for Sochnut in Istanbul with a mission to try to help European Jewry. He has a son, I think he has a daughter, too, but I don't know for sure. His son is called Sadija; he was a professor

of political science at several universities, including Tel Aviv and Washington. His main interest was to create peace among warring parties, to conclude peace treaties. He wrote a study on Somalia and was here, too. So, the grandson of a Curug Jew became an expert on Somalia... They still speak Serbian well.

At home my grandparents mainly spoke German and Hungarian but they were also quite fluent in Serbian. My grandmother didn't wear a wig, she wasn't observant to such an extent, but she kept a kosher household. Sabbath was observed, they went to the synagogue every Friday and Saturday, and of course on holidays. Neither my grandmother nor my grandfather was very much into politics, but my grandmother was rather active in a Zionist organization for women.

My grandparents' apartment was situated in today's Avgusta Cesarca Street. They had two rooms facing the backyard. It looked like a family house located in the middle of the city. There was water and electricity, and they heated the house with coal and wood. There was a garden, too, with flowers and vegetables, but they kept no animals. They were mainly in contact with their neighbors and with Jews. To my knowledge, they had no other friends. They used to go on vacation because my grandfather worked at the railroad and had the opportunity to travel for free. I don't know whether they took my mother along with them.