

Rajzel Elbinger



This is my mother, Rajzel Elbinger. This picture must have been taken shortly before the war. I think she had it taken in a photography studio in Nowe Brzesko. It is probably one of the pictures that were given to me by the owner of that photography studio after we returned to Nowe Brzesko after the war. He had kept some pictures of my family throughout the war.

Father and Mother were about the same age. She was born in 1900 or 1901. Mother was born in Strzemieszyce. That's a small town in Silesia, near Katowice. People tended to call her by her Jewish name, Rajzel, but she had Roza in her papers. Her maiden name was Margulies. She had medium length hair. She was of medium build. To me, Mother was the most beautiful in the world, and most of all I think she was educated, and Father wasn't. I think she'd graduated from

gymnasium and was head and shoulders over Father when it came to intellect. In our family, Mom was more enterprising compared to Father, more lively, knew this and that - though she was from a religious family too.

To my mind she was a fantastic person. Mother was well in with the local elite: with the secretary of Nowe Brzesko borough, who she knew well, with his wife, with the teachers in Nowe Brzesko too. Well, as far as Nowe Brzesko went, that was the sort of... intellectual clique, if you like. Mother was the only one in town who could speak French - I remember when the first Germans arrived, the officers, she could talk to them in French. I don't know where she'd learnt French. She must have wanted to learn it, because she certainly didn't learn it at school. She was from a religious family, but not such an orthodox one that their whole life centered on praying - above all there was a living to be earned. I don't know what Mother's parents did. As I remember, her parents were already dead, only her brothers and sisters were still alive. Her two brothers lived in Bedzin. One definitely was called Dawid. The other one had a typical Jewish name... I can't remember. I remember he was tall. The shorter one was Dawid. Mother's sister, Frania, lived in Chrzanow. Long before the war she and her family immigrated to Antwerp, to Belgium. Mother had family in Sosnowiec too, but I don't remember exactly who.