

The Zylberberg Family



This is my family. This is my most valuable photo. From the left, in the lower row: my sister Surel, my mother Hinda, my father Mordechaj, my brother Duwydl; in the upper row: me, Lybaly - my brother Mojsze's wife, Mojsze, my brother Wigde.

My father, Mordechaj Zylberberg, was born in Ozarow Kielecki, about 40 kilometers from Krasnik, around 1884 - 85. My mother, Hinda, nee Nyrenberg, was born in Krasnik around 1888 - 89. My father had a furrier and cap-making workshop, while my mother simply kept house: she maintained a traditional Jewish kitchen and bore children. My parents were very religious. My father dressed traditionally, kept his head covered and wore a kaput [caftan]. He was never without a cap. He was a Hasid, a member of the Lubliner Rebbe's circle. The only school my parents went to was cheder. They could read the prayer book, but they certainly couldn't write in Hebrew or Yiddish. I don't know how they met and got married, but I'm certain that the marriage was arranged by a shadkhan.

Ninety percent of the clientele in my father's workshop were Poles, because Jews only bought his black caps for the holidays: Pesach, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, but the Poles came in frequently. My father knew a few words of Polish and was able to communicate with his Polish clients, and the clients could usually understand a little Yiddish. But my father couldn't speak Polish, and my mother had nothing at all to do with it [the Polish language], because she didn't get involved in matters to do with the workshop or the business. They had both been brought up among people who spoke only Yiddish.

There were seven of us children. Two died a few days or weeks after being born, and five survived: my eldest brother Mojsze was born in 1908, Wigde, younger than him, was born about two or three years later, I was the third, and the fourth, Duwydl, younger than me, was born in 1920 or a little later, and the youngest was a girl, Surel. I don't know exactly when she was born, but I remember that before the war she had started to go to elementary school, so she was seven or eight. Mojsze got married in 1932 to Lybaly Lederwerk from Ozarow Kielecki, who moved to Krasnik, where my

brother built himself a little brick house out of her dowry, about one kilometer from our cottage. He sold fabrics for clothes there, measured in ells and so his shop became known as 'lokciowka' [the Ellery]. Mojsze and Lybaly had a little girl, a very pretty child, I remember her well. Wigde married too, when I was in jail. Like my father, he worked in a furrier and cap-making workshop, somewhere in Wielkopolska.