

Rudolf, Andrej And Ruzena R.



This photograph was taken in Topolcany in 1931. I, Ruzena, am on the right, sitting beside me is Rudolf, the younger of my two older brothers, and behind us is our older brother Andrej. The photo was taken during the time I was learning to walk. They told me that when the photographer had posed me and walked back to his camera, I would run after him. So my older brother had to hold me from behind.

We spoke German at home. My father learned his trade in Vienna, where he'd lived from the age of twelve almost up to World War I, so German was his mother tongue. My mother could also speak German, but her main language was Hungarian. With the maid my parents spoke Slovak, and when they didn't want the children to understand them, they spoke Hungarian together. We, the children, spoke Slovak together, after all, all three of us attended a Slovak school. So at home there were three languages spoken, but German dominated.

As far as clothing goes, we all dressed the same as everyone else of our social class, regardless of religion. Which means no typical Jewish clothing. My father always wore a suit. Under his suit jacket he had a vest, and pinned on it he had a pocket watch on a gold chain. My mother liked wearing silk dresses most of all. Up until she died, she wore mostly silk dresses, even at home. Up to lunchtime she'd wear a normal dress, so that the silk ones wouldn't smell like the kitchen, and after lunch she'd shower and put on a silk dress. I remember going around looking for silk for her dresses. Because back then you couldn't always get it.

My father was a very kind father. You know, he was already relatively old when his children were born. My brother Rudolf was born when my father was 52, and I was born a year later. We were his

treasures. Otherwise he worried about his business. He lived for that. He and Mother got along very well. Sometimes he'd grumble a little to himself, but I never heard them argue. My father was a very honorable person. Honor was very important in our home. One always kept one's word, and lying was completely out of the question. They were principles, which today, especially in Slovakia, are no longer at all principal. I observe the principles I was brought up in to this day, and my brother Rudolf is a very correct and principled person. Our mother was very strict with us. She always emphasized what a person's responsibilities were. She never talked about rights.