

A Photograph From Trencin Of My Mother And Sister



This is my mother Etela W. nee Kohane (second from left), and my sister Maria (first from left). I don't know the two other people in the picture. The photo was taken in Trencin in 1942.

My mother became a widow in 1916. My father fell in World War I. As a widow, my mother got a newsstand, but she probably wouldn't have survived on the newsstand alone. She also had a little general store as well as a little pub. The same as my father's parents. When she looked at a person and saw that he'd already had enough, she didn't serve him any more. And I remember that this caused scandals. They'd yell at her: "You Jewess, damn you!"

I was already 8 years old when she married a second time. She married her cousin. He was also from Gruszow Wielki, from some poor family with a lot of children. I know that he was a cattle merchant and being a cattle merchant is what brought him here. When they met, my mother didn't want to live alone, so they married. They had a daughter, Maria, in Hebrew Miriam. I was very glad to have a sister. I loved her very much and she loved me very much too. She was interested in embroidery, and somewhere I've got some embroidery that she did, to remember her by.

My sister liked our parents, but she was very fixated on me as well. I've got this impression that didn't study further than elementary school. When we had a farm, she worked on it like every other farmer's daughter. Her friends were the local girls. Shortly after my wedding, in March of 1942, the Guardists took her away. When they came for her, our father wasn't home. When he found out what had happened, he wanted to commit suicide. Mother stopped him. Before it happened, they had been warned by a Slovak policeman by the name of Cincala. He warned my parents that Mana [Maria's nickname] should hide, because the Guardists were coming. I don't know if our parents didn't believe it, or if they were afraid. In the end Viktor didn't commit suicide, but then their turn

came. They thought that they were being sent to work. So they gave away the furniture, which was of better quality, to their friend Anderko, and my mother gave him my father's watch, which he had inherited from his grandfather, who had in turn inherited it from his grandfather. That courageous person, Juraj Anderko, has a certain measure of credit for my survival. But I'll get back to that later. They took my sister, who was 18 years old at the time, away to Poprad.