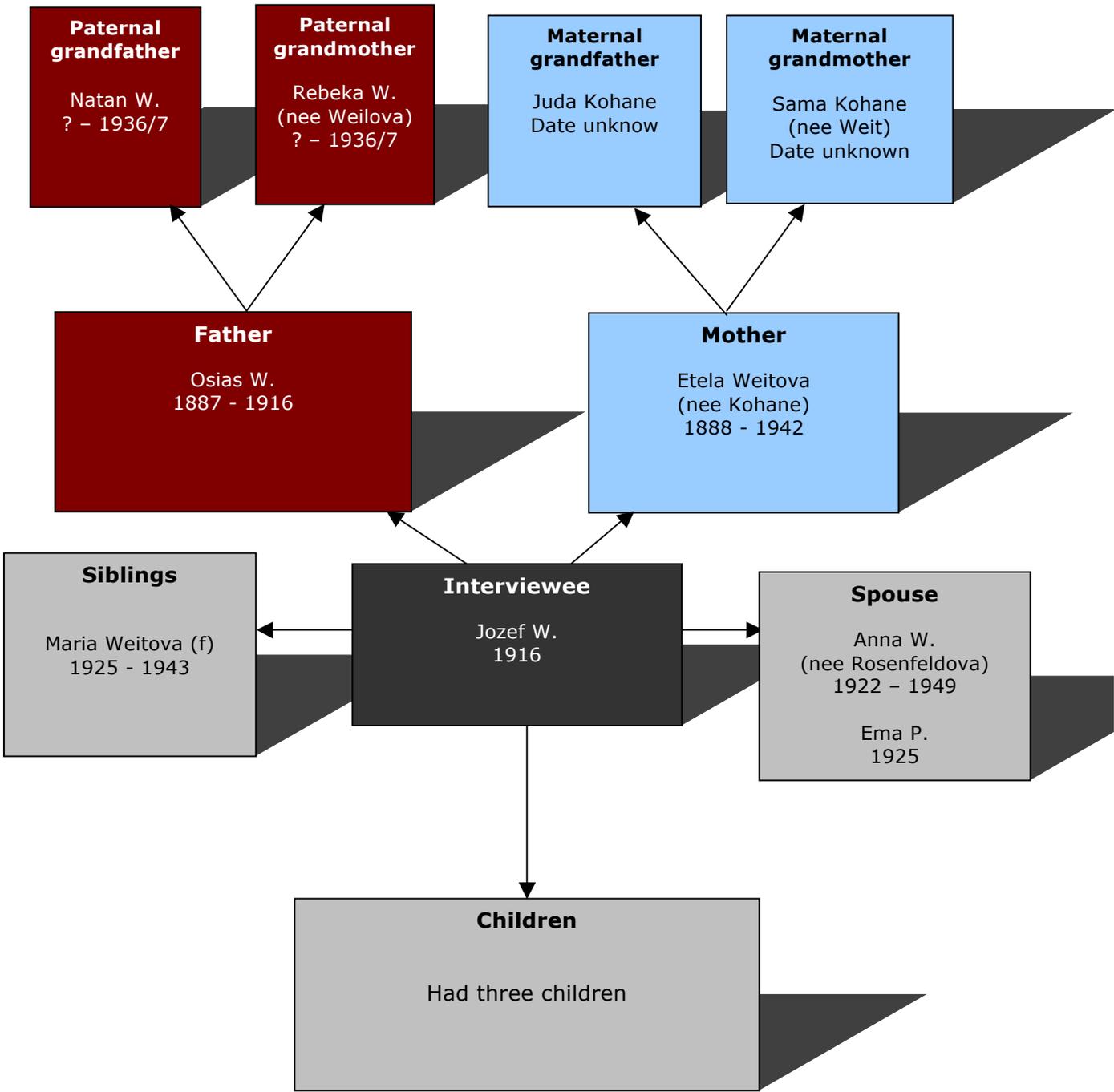


**Family Tree**



## The interviewee and his family

### *Full name*

Jozef W.

### *Where and when were you born?*

Pusovce (today Slovakia), 16<sup>th</sup> February 1916

### *Where else did you live?*

Kosice (today Slovakia), 1945 – 1947

Moscow (today Russia), 1947 - 1953

Bratislava (today Slovakia), 1953 – 1956, 1959 - till today

Prague (today Czech Republic), 1953, 1956 - 1959

### *Your educational level?*

Qualified for the position of docent at the Philosophical Faculty at Comenius University in Bratislava.

### *What sort of work do/did you do?*

1937 – 1938: teacher at the Jewish primary school in Levoca

1939 – 1940: worked for the for the Office for emigration for Jewish youth to the then Palestine, Youth Aliyah

1940 – 1941: teacher at the Jewish primary school in Trencin

1944 – 1945: journalist for the Czechoslovak Army Magazine and in Nove Slovo

1945 – 1947: worked for the daily paper Vychodoslovenska Pravda, where he became editor-in-chief

1947 - 1953: editor at the Czechoslovak offices of Moscow Radio in Moscow

1953 – 1956: program director for Czechoslovak Radio in Slovakia

1956 – 1963: General Secretary of OIR in Prague

1963 – 1971: teacher at Comenius University, Department of Journalism, in Bratislava

In 1971, fired for political reasons

1969 – 1970: taught at the Munich Academy for Television and Film

1971 - 1976: worked as "secretary" at the Academy of Industrial Systems Engineering, where he took minutes and served coffee. After approximately a half year he was asked to develop techniques to convince the directors of Slovak industrial companies to not be afraid of computers.

1976: retired

*How religious was your parents' home? How were you raised?*

We were the only Jewish family in Pusovce. We used to travel to Chmelov to pray. The prayer hall was at my grandpa's place in that little room which was also a bedroom. I liked celebrating the Sabbath very much. But you won't find a person that wouldn't reminisce about it. It belongs to the poetry of the Jewish religion. Everywhere absolute cleanliness and a set table. On the table wine, barches and chicken soup. On Saturday we had shoulet for lunch. I remember that I liked the carnival – Purim, because I liked acting. Jewish children from several villages would get together, and we'd put on plays. I usually played the part of a drunk. We made fun of Haman, the Hitler from three thousand years ago. During the Purim holiday my grandfather would tell me about how in the Persian Empire the Jews were threatened by genocide, which Haman [*Purim recalls the victory over Haman, the minister of the Persian king Ahasuerus, who wanted to exterminate the Jewish nation. These events took place during the years 369 – 356 BCE – Editor's note*] wanted to unleash. When we were talking about it, he reminded me that the Jews were persecuted later as well, in Spain. They forced them to convert to the Christian faith, and those that didn't do it, they murdered, burned them alive. From him I learned of the Inquisition. From the age of 3 I used to go see a religion teacher in Chmelov, where we studied the Torah.

Later I began attending school in Gelnica [*Kosice region*]. A Jewish religion teacher lived in Gelnica, I think he was named Reichner. Reichner taught only the lower grade of religion education. My mother had this idea, though she wasn't any fanatic, that I could at the very least be better educated in the Talmud. I'm guessing that she wanted me to be a rabbi – certainly she wouldn't have had any objections to it.

What was worse was that I apparently wasn't inclined towards being religious. Simply put, I was obstinate. Well, and once it happened that we had a fight one Saturday morning at the dormitory. The rabbi heard yelling and came over "What are you doing here? Why, it's Saturday! You can't fight! You're breaking the holy Sabbath!" And we made faces at the rabbi. And I remember that he grabbed me by my shirt collar and shook me. And I said: "Rabbi, sir, the collar will tear off and it'll be your sin. That's also work, when you're shaking me." He gave me a slap. I said: "That's even more work. That's a sin." [*during the Sabbath, 39 main work activities are forbidden, to which the injunction against others is related. During the subsequent scuffle the Rabbi broke several rules, in that he was*

*basically doing physical work – Editor’s note*]. Well, that was bad. He complained to my mother. I don’t know if he wrote her, or what. And when I came home for the holidays, my mother already knew about the conflict. My stepfather wasn’t home right then, and she was rolling some dough. And I said: “Mom, I don’t think that God exists.” She started crying, and I remember that she showered the dough with tears. I felt terribly guilty. After that I apologized to her. It was terrible. But the truth is that I refused to return there. So that’s how my studies at the yeshivah ended. I didn’t become a rabbi.

*What is your mother tongue?*

Yiddish

*What other languages do you speak?*

Slovak, German, Russian

*Where were you during the Holocaust?*

1939 – 1940: worked for the Office responsible for emigration of Jewish youth to the then Palestine, the Youth Aliyah.

1940 – 1941: teacher at the Jewish primary school in Trencin

1942 – 1944: Novaky labor camp (today Slovakia)

1944: Partisan in the Slovak National Uprising

1944: In hiding: Budapest (today Hungary)

1944 – 1945: In hiding in various places all over Slovakia

1944 – 1945: journalist for the Czechoslovak Army Magazine and in Nove Slovo

*What did you do after the Holocaust?*

1945 – 1947: worked for the daily paper Vychodoslovenska Pravda, where he became editor-in-chief

1947 - 1953: editor at the Czechoslovak offices of Moscow Radio in Moscow

1953 – 1956: program director for Czechoslovak Radio in Slovakia

1956 – 1963: General Secretary of OIR in Prague

1963 – 1971: teacher at Comenius University, Department of Journalism, in Bratislava

In 1971, fired for political reasons

1969 – 1970: taught at the Munich Academy for Television and Film

1971 - 1976: worked as “secretary” at the Academy of Industrial Systems Engineering, where he took minutes and served coffee. After approximately a half

year he was asked to develop techniques to convince the directors of Slovak industrial companies to not be afraid of computers.

## Siblings

*Their names*

Maria (f) (Jewish name: Miriam)

*Where and when were they born?*

Pusovce (today Slovakia), 1925

*What is their mother tongue?*

Yiddish

*Their educational level?*

Finished elementary school

*Their occupations?*

-

*Where do/did they live?*

Pusovce (today Slovakia), 1925 - 1942

*Where else did they live?*

-

*Do they have children?*

-

*Where and when did they die?*

Concentration camp: Auschwitz (today Poland), 1943

## **Spouse**

*Name?*

Anna W. (nee Rosenfeldova)

Ema P.

*Where and when was he/she born?*

Anna: Rozhanovce (today Slovakia), 7<sup>th</sup> March 1922

Ema: Place unknown, 29<sup>th</sup> July 1925

*Where else did he/she live?*

Anna: Kosice (today Slovakia), 1945 – 1947; Moscow (today Russia), 1947 – 1949

Ema: Moscow (today Russia), Bratislava (today Slovakia), Prague (today Czech Republic)

*Is he/she Jewish?*

Anna: Yes

Ema: Yes

*What is his/her mother tongue?*

Anna: Hungarian

Ema: Slovak

*His/her educational level?*

Anna: finished high school

Ema: finished university in Moscow

*Occupation?*

Anna: No information

Ema: Scientist

*Where and when did he/she die?*

Anna: Moscow (today Russia), 12th November 1949

Ema: Still alive

*Tell me anything you know about his/her siblings (Name, date of birth and death, occupation, place of residence, name of wife and children, whether their family is Jewish and whether it is religious).*

Anna: had no siblings

Ema: no information

## Children

*Their names?*

Had three children.

*Were they raised Jewish/do they identify themselves as Jews?*

No information

*Where and when were they born?*

No information

*Where else did they live?*

No information

*Their educational level?*

No information

*Their occupations?*

No information

*How many grandchildren do you have?*

Two grandchildren

## Father

*His name?*

Osias W. (Jewish name: Joshua)

*Where and when was he born?*

Orlik (today Slovakia), 1887

*Where else did he live?*

Pusovce (today Slovakia)

*Where and when did he die?*

Died at the front during World War I, 1916

*What sort of education did he have?*

No information

*What sort of work did he do?*

No information

*How religious was he?*

Deeply religious

*What was his mother tongue?*

Yiddish

*Army service: which army and what years?*

Austro-Hungarian Army in WWI.

*Tell me about his brothers and sisters. (name, date of birth and death, occupation, place of residence, family, etc.)*

Name	place and date of birth/death	occupation	biographical data and origins of spouse	biographical data of children	describe how religious they were
Pinchas W. (m)	?, ?/Died in the Holocaust	Farmed, had a small shop and pub	Came from the town of Circ, died in the Holocaust	Reuben (m), died in Slovak National Uprising Jakub (m), died in Slovak National Uprising	Orthodox
Ester Solomon (nee W.) (f)	?,?/? , USA	Housewife	Solomon, Lawyer	Two daughters	No information

*Where was he during the Holocaust?*

Died before

*If he survived, what did he do after?*

-

## Paternal grandfather

*Your paternal grandfather's name?*

Natan W.

*Where and when was he born?*

Jaslo (today Poland), Date unknown

*Where else did he live?*

Orlik (today Slovakia)

Chicago (USA)

Chmelov (today Slovakia)

*Where and when did he die?*

Chmelov (today Slovakia), 1936 or 1937

*What sort of education did he have?*

No information

*What sort of work did he do?*

Because he wanted to support his family, he went to find work in America and for some time lived in Chicago. He had this back basket and there in that back basket he had buttons, drawstrings for pants and so on, and he sold these things. There were large slaughter houses in Chicago, and their owners wanted him, because he was Orthodox, to stamp the meat [*Hechsher: authorization or permission confirming ritual cleanliness. The most familiar form of hechsher confirms that meat or other foods are prepared according to ritual regulations – Editor's note*]. He turned it down, though, because he didn't trust those people. He didn't believe that they wouldn't foist off on him meat that hadn't been prepared in ritual fashion. He saved up some money in America, and returned to Chmelov, where he bought a little house. He also bought two cows and a small plot of land. As a farmer he worked in the fields. There he would sow, plow, and reap. He took care of the cows, mucked out the manure, and so on. Together with my father's brother and his wife, my grandparents had a little shop. It was a

small general store, which my grandma ran with her daughter-in-law. Besides this little shop they also had a pub.

*How religious was he?*

My grandfather's family was very religious. My grandfather even went about circumcising far and wide [*mohel: performs ritual circumcision – brit milah. Circumcision is one of the fundamental rules of Judaism – Editor's note*]. On Saturdays a so-called shabesgoy used to come help out. Goy means non-Jew. It was a lady neighbor of theirs, who used to help out with various light work and would get paid for it. On Saturday, they for example weren't even allowed to light candles. On Friday they'd still light candles themselves, but not anymore on Saturday [*during the Sabbath, 39 main work activities are forbidden, to which the injunction against others is related. The "kindling of fire" is also among the forbidden activities – Editor's note*]. Jews from the surrounding region used to come to my grandfather's to pray. The prayer hall was at my grandpa's place in that little room which was also a bedroom. The ten people [*minyan: a prayer minimum of ten men older than 13 – Editor's note*] for prayers came from the towns of Radvanovce, Chmelov and Pusovce.

*What was his mother tongue?*

Yiddish

*Army service: which army and what years?*

No information

*Tell me about his brothers and sisters.*

No information

*Where was he during the Holocaust?*

Died before

*If he survived what did he do after?*

-

## Paternal grandmother

*Your paternal grandmother's name?*

Rebeka W., (nee Weilova)

*Where and when was she born?*

Near Vranov nad Toplou (today Slovakia), Date unknown

*Where else did she live?*

Orlik (today Slovakia)

Chmelov (today Slovakia)

*Where and when did she die?*

Chmelov (today Slovakia), 1936 or 1937

*What sort of education did she have?*

No information

*What sort of work did she do?*

Housewife

*How religious was she?*

My grandmother led a strictly kosher household. My grandparents prayed every day, and lived according to Jewish regulations – the halakhah. If I still remember properly, then by me my grandfather used to wear a dark suit, a caftan. And Grandma, as far as I remember, used to dress normally. Though she did wear, as I've mentioned, a wig, or a headscarf.

*What was her mother tongue?*

Yiddish

*Tell me about her brothers and sisters.*

No information

*Where was she during the Holocaust?*

Died before

*If she survived what did she do after?*

-

## Mother

*Her name?*

Etela Weitova (nee Kohane)

*Where and when was she born?*

Gruszow Wielki (today Poland), 18<sup>th</sup> January 1888

*Where else did she live?*

Pusovce (today Slovakia)

*Where and when did she die?*

Concentration camp: Auschwitz (today Poland), 1942

*What sort of education did she have?*

No information

*What sort of work did she do?*

Housewife

*How religious was she?*

All Jewish rules were observed in our family. My mother was an Orthodox Jewess and dressed accordingly. She always wore a wig or a headscarf. On normal weekdays she dressed normally, like the other farmwomen, but during holidays she always dressed up. She also kept a kosher household. Despite her religious convictions, she wasn't a fanatic; she always said that we're all people.

*What was her mother tongue?*

Yiddish

*Tell me about her brothers and sisters.*

I don't think that my mother had any siblings, as she never mentioned any.

*Where was she during the Holocaust?*

Concentration camp: Auschwitz (today Poland), 1942. Died there

*If she survived, what did she do after?*

-

## Maternal grandfather

*Your maternal grandfather's name?*

Juda Kohane

*Where and when was he born?*

Poland, date unknown

*Where else did he live?*

Gruszow Wielki (today Poland)

*Where and when did he die?*

No information

*What sort of education did he have?*

No information

*What sort of work did he do?*

No information

*How religious was he?*

I remember my Polish grandparents only dimly. Grandpa was named Juda Kohane and was a kohanite [kohenim: members of the tribe of Levi, descendants of Aaron. Priestly origins are inherited from the father. Most of the kohenim's responsibilities ceased after the destruction of the Temple, however several of them have survived to this day. For example, a kohen is the first to be called to read from the Torah – Editor's note]. This means that he was of priestly descent. I don't remember the name of his wife, my grandmother, any more. I unfortunately don't know anything else about these grandparents. I never got to know them very well.

*What was his mother tongue?*

Yiddish

*Army service: which army and what years?*

No information

*Tell me about his brothers and sisters.*

No information

*Where was he during the Holocaust?*

No information

*If he survived what did he do after?*

-

## Maternal grandmother

*Your maternal grandmother's name?*

Sama Kohane (nee Weit)

*Where and when was she born?*

No information

*Where else did she live?*

Gruszow Wielki (today Poland)

*Where and when did she die?*

No information

*What sort of education did she have?*

No information

*What sort of work did she do?*

No information

*How religious was she?*

Deeply religious

*What was her mother tongue?*

Yiddish

*Tell me about her brothers and sisters.*

No information

*Where was she during the Holocaust?*

No information

*If she survived what did she do after?*

-