

Katharina Stecklmacherova With Her Daughters Karmela Ben Dom And Michal Maud Beer



This photo was taken during the postwar period, in 1948 in Prostejov. From the left it shows my sister Karmela Ben Dom, née Stecklmacherova, our mother Katharina Stecklmacherova, née Steinerova, and me, Michal Maud Beer, née Stecklmacherova.

After the war, my mother, sister and I returned - by miracle we'd survived the Holocaust. We still had a part of what remained of the things we'd taken with us three years earlier to Terezin. In March 1949 we left for Israel. Mother divided our belongings up into three portions; we knew that we weren't going to be living together. I got a medium-sized stainless-steel spoon that had returned with us from Terezin. As long as my children were little, they ate soup and porridge with it; since they grew up the spoon has been mine and I use it only. When my first granddaughter, Inbal, was little, she ate with my spoon when she was at our place. My wish is to eat with my spoon until the end of my days.

Mother brought our things to Prostejov, and moved into a rented apartment with other repatriates. She managed to find a room for us in a four-room apartment on Krizovskeho Street; Mrs. Koblerova, Mr. Herzog and a married couple from Hungary or Slovakia lived with us. There were seven of us living in one apartment - the remnants of four families.

Before the beginning of the school year my mother traveled to Prague to fetch Karmela and me. She made the rounds to some of our Aryan acquaintances, the decent ones, and they were a majority, who returned the things they'd hidden for us before we were transported to Terezin. Our neighbors and acquaintances in Prostejov were decent when we returned with our mother. She furnished the room a bit, at first we didn't even have a wardrobe, nor beds, for another few weeks

we still slept on the floor and our meager clothing hung on nails in the walls. We three -Mother, Karma and I - later moved along with Mrs. Koblerova into her old apartment on Trebizskeho Street, close to the train station.

Except for the aunt from Miroslav, no one from our family had returned. Of my friends, only Eva Herrmannova, a child of mixed parentage. I pondered and brooded over the meaning of life, and thought of suicide; but it was clear to me that after what my mother had been through, I couldn't do something like that to her; and a healthy survival instinct probably saved me.