

Magda Frkalova With Her Godfather And Aunt Olga Pal



In this picture, on the right, is my godfather, sitting in the middle beside him am I, Magda Frkalova, and on the left is my aunt, my mother's sister Olga Pal, née Haasova. The photo is most likely from 1942. If I'm to be honest, we were a relatively well-off family. We had a car, even though in 1941 the Guardists confiscated it. And then that hell concerning Jews and their progressive transports to the camps began. In 1942 I received a summons to Trnava. It was the very first transport which was supposed to leave, supposedly for work. But I refused. I somehow simply didn't believe that we were supposed to go someplace just to work. You see, already at that time I'd heard various rumors that there were camps for Jews in Germany, and that similar ones were being built in Poland as well. It was said that people were dying in them, and that they were even murdering them there. And that wasn't something I wanted. So I decided that I'd run away. My mother was of course against it at first, because she thought that by doing so I'd blacken the entire family, and that I'd harm them with it. But my father, who loved me very much, was for my leaving. So in the end I left for Subcarpathian Ruthenia, to live with my aunt, my mother's sister Olga. I hid at her place for almost a year, and on the cusp of the years 1942 and 1943 I had to return, because the regime had changed there too, and they'd begun to persecute Jews. Once someone gave my godfather a tip that they'd be rounding up Jews during the night, and so they hid me at the vicarage. There I spent the night, and right the next day I had to set out for home. But my trip home wasn't easy. As I was traveling without any papers, it was very dangerous and difficult. It was already 1943, and the situation was more than complicated. My godfather drove me to the border, where I was supposed to make contact with some nuns. But they were very reluctant to help, and showed no interest in me at all. That was in Pavlovce, when I asked them how I was to get home. They told me I could simply get on the bus, or train, and that I'd be home right away. That it wasn't a problem. That didn't seem right to me, because before that my godfather had warned me that without papers I shouldn't use public transport at all. He'd warned me that there were checkpoints everywhere, and they could easily catch me. But I was young, and took the nuns' advice. I got onto

the train. That's something that I really shouldn't have done. At the Slovak ? Hungarian border the police caught me. They were threatening to hand me over to the Germans. That's something I didn't want to happen at any cost, and so I tried to wriggle out of it somehow. Luckily they were changing shifts, and one of the new policemen on the Slovak side knew my father. He was from around Trnava, and was very indebted to my father, who'd helped him more than once. He told me that if I succeeded to get away from the policeman on the Hungarian side, he'd help me on the Slovak side, and would help me hide somewhere and get me home somehow. The problem with the police there was that they weren't able to communicate with each other. The Slovak didn't speak Hungarian, and the Hungarian on the other hand didn't know even a word of Slovak. So I jumped in and somehow convinced the Hungarian policeman to hand me over to the Slovak one. By some miracle I succeeded, and for one week I found a hiding place with one pharmacist in Pavlovce. I was shut up in the bathroom, so that no one would see me. That Slovak policeman arranged that for me. In the meantime, he'd called my father to tell him about me, and they were trying to get me away from there. At that time my father hadn't yet been deported, as he had a presidential exception, but on the other hand, he wasn't able to move about Slovakia freely. Each Jew had his assigned territory that he couldn't leave. So my father decided that he'd send one traveling salesman for me. He was this salesman that offered and sold goods all over Slovakia. My father gave him 20,000 crowns to pay the Slovak policeman for helping me, and also for finding me a hiding place.