

My Grandma Feeding My Only Daughter



My grandmother, Malvina Simkova. This photograph is from 1957, and shows Grandma feeding my only daughter. The photo was taken in Bratislava. My grandma, Malvina Simkova, nee Löwyova, was born on 11th June 1971 in Trenčin. Someone remembered that her grandfather, or great-grandfather was a famous rabbi. But who it was, I have no idea. From this one can deduce that in those days these members of my family were Orthodox Jews [Neolog communities in Slovakia began appearing only after the Budapest Congress in the years 1868/69 - Editor's note]. I had very good experiences with my grandma. After my grandfather died she lived with us. Grandma even also brought up my daughter, Dasa. She was a very wise woman. People from all around used to always come to her for advice. Malvinéni [Hungarian: Aunt Malvina - Editor's note] was a concept.

When she was 95, she was drinking beer in Zelezná Studnicka [Zelezná Studnicka: a recreational region near Bratislava - Editor's note] and someone said 'Grandma, that's a beautiful age to be.' She said: 'What? That's a beautiful age?! Eighty, that was beautiful!'. So I'm sticking to that, and when I was 80, I said to myself that this is that beautiful age that my grandma mentioned. She was of small stature, poor and those kind of people live a long time. She had gray hair. Beautiful smiling eyes. Her eyes, shone, laughed. She radiated well-being and wisdom. She had no schooling. She was a housewife from the farm. She had natural intelligence and that's what gave her personality character. Grandma Malvina died at the age of 100, on 19th May 1971, and is buried in Slavicie Udolie in Bratislava. Up to the war, Grandma was an Orthodox Jewess. After the war, no longer.