

Irena Wygodzka With Her Relatives



This is a picture of my family on vacation in Bystra, taken in 1935.

In the picture I'm standing between my cousins: Estusia and Nacek. My father is standing on the left. There's also a girl whose name I don't remember and Lilka Hamburger, a friend of Estusia's.

Almost every year we'd go on vacation. We'd leave the city for at least a month, or two. We'd take all our stuff. We'd go near Katowice, to Bystra, to Cyganski Las, sometimes to Rabka, always to southern Poland, Silesia.

I never went to the seaside before the war. Our more distant family would go with us, too, and we'd spend time there together. Most often we'd meet with Aunt Mania, that is Mother's sister, and her husband Tobiasz, my father's brother. They had one daughter - Estusia.

Estusia was my favorite cousin. We loved each other very much. I remember how once I went with her and her mother to Krynica. We were there in the summer, in a hotel called Tel Awiw.

Krynica Gorska was a health resort. Estusia was some ten years older than I. She graduated from a gymnasium in Sosnowiec. I don't remember if it was a Polish or Jewish one. She wasn't married.

Estusia was a charming, intelligent girl. She was self-taught and she was very radical, progressive. Progressive - I mean her father was very religious, he had this long beard, but she sympathized with the communists.

She didn't belong to the party, but she had a whole group of friends with whom she met and discussed political issues. Her leftist views were well known in the family. Her parents were pious Jews, but they didn't mind her communist views.

Politics didn't play any role in my friendship with Estusia. She was the one with communist sympathies, I was a member of a Zionist organization.

She didn't try to convert me to communism. My brother Natan, yes, she did. She had influenced him, but I was too stupid, too naïve. I was a child. Estusia died in Auschwitz. Together with her parents, she was deported from the ghetto in Sosnowiec.

We were also in touch with Chaim, that is Father's brother and his entire family. Chaim and Aunt Cesia had several children. Four sons: Abram, Herman, Nachman, whom we called Nacek, Aronek and one daughter - Netka.