

## Magda Frkalova Before Deportation



This is the last photograph of me before I was arrested in Bratislava and transported away. It was taken in 1943. Then everything took place quickly. At the Gestapo they asked my mother where her husband and her other children were. So she told them that her husband had already been taken away, and that her daughter was in Bratislava. She didn't know where I lived, but my brother knew. I'd told him, because my mother had pressured both of us, that if we were going to keep everything from her, she'd jump under a streetcar. So my brother softened me up and I told him my address. I shouldn't have done that. They would never have found me. But at the Gestapo they began to beat him, and he told them where I lived. It was already nighttime, and I heard some steps coming up the stairs. I heard the jackboots kicking. It was midnight, and I knew that they

were looking for me. I'll never forget that date: it was 13th October 1944. After being jailed at the Gestapo in Bratislava, my mother, my brother Imrich and I were transported to Sered. That was 15th October; we'd been in jail for two days. At the time my brother was only 15. He was still this half-child. We were in the Sered camp for only two days, because the transports were constantly departing from there. So they sent all three of us to Auschwitz. But there they didn't accept us. They loaded us into cattle wagons again and sent us to Berlin. In Berlin they separated us. The men and women were separated. That's the last time in my life that I saw my brother Imrich. It was horrible. We were in the wagons like that for eight days. The conditions were horrible. Many of our fellow sufferers already went insane on the way there. Older people were already dying during the trip. Some people threw us bread as the train passed by. At the border, when the train was standing still, they stuck a piece of bread through these little windows, and that's all we had to eat. From Berlin they transported us by train to the Ravensbrück concentration camp. There our suffering continued. It was a concentration camp, where they also cremated. Every night the chimneys there were burning. Dead bodies were being burned in ovens, and there was a terribly sweet smell. Once a transport from Hungary arrived. People arrived on that train in desolate shape, barefoot, and right away they sent them to their deaths. My mother and I were together the whole time. When we arrived there, she was only 40, and so they left us together. I tried to survive in all sorts of ways. I ate everything they gave us. Soup, if you could call it that. They made it from turnips, beets or potato peels, and there was even sand in it. But if you want to survive, you don't care. I terribly wanted to live, I wanted to survive and so I also forced my mother to eat as well. But she didn't try very hard. At the end, she weighed only about 40 kilos! It was truly terrible in the camps. Terrible.