

Zofia Minder



This is my darling aunt - Zofia Minder, my mother's sister. The photo must have been taken in Cracow in the 1930s.

My maternal grandparents had six children: first they had three daughters, and then three sons. I was very friendly with my aunts and uncles. The eldest daughter was Zofia, born in 1894. Aunt Zofia was the most wonderful person in the family, and basically she looked after the whole family. That was typical for larger Jewish families in Galicia: caring for relatives and for people from the surrounding community in general.

Zofia was terribly overworked and highly regarded as a tailor, because she'd been to these cloth-cutting academies in Prague. Even the wife of Beck, the minister, would stop off in Cracow to be measured up by Aunt Zofia on her way to Krynica. My aunt lived and had her studio at 3 Golebia

Street. Later on she got married to Izydor Minder, a lawyer, Cracow Bund activist and eminent bibliophile. Zofia and Izydor had one son, Jerzy, three years older than me.

When Granddad Wilhelm turned 52, and he was ill, Zofia called a family gathering and it was agreed that they would all make a monthly contribution, if you like, for my grandparents, pay them something like a pension. And that way my grandparents survived - vegetated - through to the war in the small apartment on Sarego Street, because basically the pension that they'd drummed up was very meager. Only Roman - the dentist - and Edward - the oil engineer - were doing a bit better for themselves; the rest of the children had to work hard. And my grandparents were poor, but proud. I remember that once we were living in Rabka we would send my grandparents postage stamps so that they could afford a card to write to us.