

Heda Ambrova With Partisans Trekking Through The Mountains



This picture was taken in March or April of 1945 in the mountains near the village of Motycky. From left: A forest warden, Dominik Ruzicka, I, Heda Ambrova, at that time Hechtova, and an unknown soldier.

One day I saw ski tracks on the slope opposite us. After that we didn't cook or heat. We would walk down to the village to find out what was going on. We found out that Dano Chladny, an officer of the Czechoslovak army, had begun to organize a partisan group, which later we also joined. I don't know why, but my cousin Vojtech Kürti signed up only the men as members. Maybe he didn't like women. When he was three years old, he was burned. His entire body was covered in scars. On one side he had someone else's ear sewn on in a plastic surgery operation, and he had only three fingers on his hand. He survived thanks to his father being a doctor, and that he was suspended in an oil bath.

One day a Soviet patrol from Jelenska Skala came to see us. They wanted to take our weapons, but our guys managed to keep them. They registered our group. Our code names were Orech 1 and Orech 2. After that we functioned on a professional level. We also began keeping proper guard. Once we received a report that above Jelenska Skala was a cave in which a woman was going to give birth in a few days. The Kürti brothers were excellent skiers, so they sent them there. We packed them some cotton parachutes, so the baby would have diapers. They were very well supplied. The baby really was born there. Mr. Gross went with the Kürtis as well, because he was a

children's doctor. Mr. Gross was part of our group. He was also Jewish. The poor guy, he was more afraid than that woman. The baby was born healthy.

The women who were in hiding with the men in the mountains were mostly Jewish, but not all of them managed to stand it and stay. Many of them went down, and that cost them their lives. Our group was supposed to be split up as well, because we had those two children they'd given me in Banska Bystrica. Mrs. Kürti, my parents, the two children and I were supposed to go to some village. Everything was prepared in advance, because we didn't know if we'd have to cross the front or not. Luckily it never happened. One night we heard a siren. The Kürtis knew that it wasn't a siren, but an avalanche. Not far from us an avalanche fell and buried many partisans who'd been crossing the front. We don't know how many people died there. Finally the idea of splitting the group was abandoned. We wintered there, and kept on guard.

During our stay in the mountains we also experienced a few close calls. Another group was active nearby. They weren't very disciplined. They used to go on the castle road, where the German army had patrols. Well, as luck would have it, they caught them. Their only one bit of luck is that they were older soldiers, Austrians. They didn't concern themselves with them, and said to them: 'You know what, we'll turn around, and you'll go away!' The second close call was when Domin and I went on patrol. Suddenly he threw me on the ground. I asked him what was going on!? 'You didn't hear that bullet?!' Back then we told ourselves that we'd had amazing luck. If it was to happen again, we probably wouldn't have survived. Daily we'd wake up to the unknown. We didn't know what the day had in store for us.