

Gustav Burgmann



This photograph was taken in Brno in the 1930s. It shows my father, Gustav Burgmann. My father was a big Czech patriot. He was tall and slender, with dark hair, and was always impeccably dressed. He wore spectacles and had a prudent air about him. He had a very mild nature. He went to schools where German was the instructional language. He successfully finished business school and got a job in Brno with Uncle Kohn, who was in the lumber business. He had various functions there; he did the accounting, administration, in short he was a jack of all trades. In those days there were no computers, accounts were written in longhand into ledgers and my father always had everything in perfect order. He was very skilled and had beautiful handwriting. After the occupation the Germans expropriated all Jewish property, including Uncle Kohn's wholesale business. Because my father was a very capable clerk, they let him work a few months more in his

job. At the beginning of 1941 they however moved him to a building at 31 Legionarska Street, where he wrote up lists of people intended for transport. An armed Gestapo officer stood watch over him all day to make sure that he didn't leave even one name off the list. I remember how exhausted and devastated he used to be when he came home. In 1942 I, along with my parents, my grandmother Jana Burgmann and her siblings were put on a transport to Terezin. In Terezin they immediately separated the men and women. For about a year I lived with my mother and grandmother in the so-called Podmokelsko barracks, and then the Dresden barracks. Father lived in the Sudetenland barracks. He was assigned a job in food distribution where he was responsible for distributing bread rations. In the beginning we used to see him each day at noon or in the afternoon for one or two hours. He would either come to where we were living or we would meet somewhere in the town on the street. Then he supposedly left for work from which he never returned. In those days we had no inkling that in Poland there were other concentration camps where Jews were dying in horrible conditions. Father likely died in Auschwitz in 1944.