

Rudolf Auerbach With His Wife Before Their Departure For Terezin



This is the last photo of my parents [Rudolf Auerbach and Marketa Auerbachova], before they left for Terezin in November 1942.

My brother and I said goodbye to our parents in the summer of 1939. We went to England and thought that our separation would be temporary, our parents told us that they were arranging it so that they could come as well. Even though we knew that it wouldn't be easy due to the various quotas and lack of funds. But our parents always hoped that they'd manage to get to Central or South America, that we'd then come join them. So it wasn't any heartbreaking parting. Then, when the war broke out, we thought that it would only be until Christmas, by Christmas we'll defeat Hitler, we'll already be back by the end of 1939. They were those theories that by the end of next and by the end of next year... until it was six years later. And our parents didn't return. But in those days... For one we were waiting that they'll come join us, that the war would last a whole six years wouldn't have occurred to me in my wildest dreams. And that they wouldn't survive... For me it was absolutely obvious that when I return I'll find them here. That I'll take the elevator up to the same apartment and that I'll find them here. They'll open the door and we'll again live like we did before the war. But that didn't happen.

Their story after our parting was roughly as follows: Sometime during 1940 they kicked my father out of work because he was a Jew. They had to give him some letter of reference, where they wrote why he was leaving, how excellent he had been, so that he'd have something when he'd be looking for another job. I've still got it at home. But what he and Mother then lived on, I don't know. Probably they had it quite hard, there weren't any savings. Mother wrote that she was making a bit of money with some household work. For financial reasons they moved to a smaller apartment, still in the same building. Perhaps the Jewish community helped them somehow. They left for Terezin in November of 1942. My father had some position on the staff there, I don't know what. They were

deported to Auschwitz on the 28th October 1944 transport. I found the date when I needed a death certificate, at the community they gave me something. Otherwise I didn't delve into it too much, it won't help a person if he knows that they departed on the 25th or the 28th. They died in Auschwitz.

When in May or June my brother sent me a letter to England, he of course didn't write in it that our parents aren't alive. He also couldn't know that yet. He wrote that for the time being he hadn't succeeded in finding out anything. It wasn't anything unusual, people were returning from the war still long after its end. That's why it didn't hurt me that much. I guess it's better to live in ignorance and still hope... I think that it's similar to when the army wrote wives or mothers that their husband, son was missing. They could still hope that he'd appear out of somewhere. When a person goes to a funeral, he sees the coffin, they'll even open it up so that he can be sure that it's not someone else, then that's something else. When he sees that this is the way it is, and no other way, that it's a done thing, perhaps he comes to terms with it better. But it's very hard. It took me a very long time, a very long time, before I realized that I'd probably never see my parents again. One day I realized, well, now Mom would be 100 years old, and Dad 101, now for sure they won't reappear. Up to that time I still, I don't know why, had at least a tiny hope.