

Jakub Julius Bachner



This is a photograph of my father, Jakub Julius Bachner. It was taken in Topolcany at the studio of Aladar Vermes. It's from the 1930s. My father survived World War II as if by miracle. It was this singular coincidence, that could be used as a theme for a film. Part of my family, together with other Jews, was held at the district courthouse in Banska Bystrica. Then when they were leading them to Kremnicka to be executed, it was at night, my father couldn't keep up with the pace. One of the German soldiers hit him with his rifle. My father fell and broke his leg. They didn't see, however, that my father had remained lying there in the forest. So they escorted the others to Kremnicka and there they killed them. My father remained lying in the forest with a broken leg until the next day. Local residents of Kremnicka found him there and had him taken to the hospital in

Banska Bystrica. The director of the hospital in Banska Bystrica was Dr. Petelen, who was this one prominent, immensely noble person, who helped Jews and partisans. He placed my father in the hospital, and so as to somehow conceal him, he wrote in the register that my father had been sent to his hometown, to Topolcany. But in reality he stayed in Banska Bystrica. Then when the Gestapo was going around the hospitals picking out Jews and partisans, there was the danger that the Germans would take my father as well. Doctor Petelen put my father in a room for those with infectious diseases, and on the door he wrote spotted typhus - 'Flecktyphus'. The Germans, when they saw that sign, didn't even touch him. My father then survived there until the liberation.