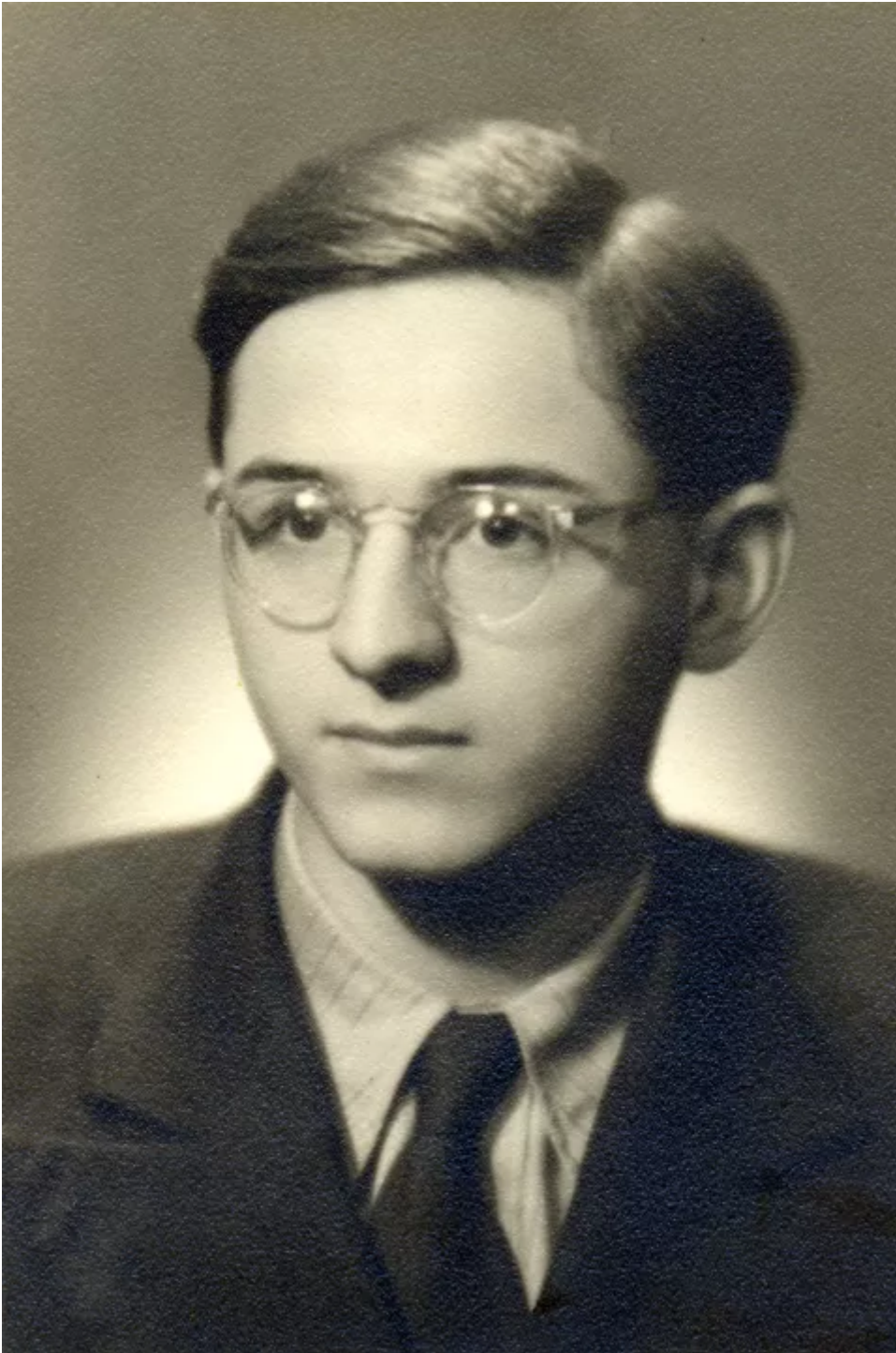


Jiri Franek



I was nineteen when this photograph of me was taken in Brno in 1941.

I had transferred from the high school in Vysoke Myto to the Jewish Practical High School in Brno, as jews were no longer allowed to study anywhere else.

Here I met many interesting people - Professor of Czech Eisinger drew me into a cell of the best Communist professors - Eisinger, Zwinger and Kohn.

Eisinger later helped me in Terezin, he helped me get work in the L 417 children's home. There I worked as a tutor, which was relatively pleasant work, inside where it was warm, and in an intellectual environment.

What was most evident on our Brno class was its enormously high standard. It's of course natural that everyone isn't stupid, but if we ignore that, then the thing was that only the select went there, those that really wanted to finish their studies.

So knowledge of German was taken for granted, there were only a couple of us that didn't know German. One classmate, Bekova, a poet, spoke it fluently.

I was one of those that didn't speak much, but even those who weren't bilingual had a certain knowledge of German.

I can't tell you a percentage, but it was a lot, certainly over 50 percent, and a lot more than half already knew French, from studying it at home, so just as an example, the knowledge of languages there was exceptional.

I finished my last, eighth form, year at the Brno high school, but right before graduation the Germans forbade us from graduating. I got my graduation confirmation after the war, even though I never did the exams.

The only professor to survive the Holocaust, Professor Weinstein, got the right after the war to give out these diplomas to those that survived - out of 29 classmates there were only four of us left.

So we four got a report card signed by Mr. Weinstein that we had absolved our schooling with such good marks that it was clear that we would have passed the final exams.

I then later got two more report cards, without any final exams! This was because later I had to go to this school in Vysoke Myto and take this course for those that couldn't finish their studies.

There they didn't forbid us from doing our final exams, but they were afraid that some of the Communists and their children that were there because of connections wouldn't be able to pass the exams, so they said that we would be able to graduate without them.

Then the high school principal in Vysoke Myto gave me a high school diploma on the basis of a Ministry resolution, because I had had completed seven grades in Vysoke Myto with excellent marks.

So I have three high school diplomas and didn't do a single final exam, which is quite the rarity!