

Ida Justitzova With Her Husband Bohumil Justitz And Their Daughter Emilie Bassova



This is a photograph of my parents, Ida Justitzova, nee Glauber, and Bohumil Justitz with my sister, Emilie Bassova, nee Justitzova. It was taken in Prague in 1938.

I'd say that my father was probably politically left-leaning, even though he definitely didn't belong to any organization. On the other hand, he was a member of the Freemasons, who definitely weren't some sort of leftists. But my sister was a member of one very left-leaning youth organization. They were named "Rote Falken", Red Falcons, so if our father allowed her this, he must have been somehow inclined towards it. Let's call it a social conscience. It was through these "Rote Falken" that I actually got to England.

Originally only I was supposed to go to England. As I've already said, my sister was a member of the "Rote Falken" organization. Their leader traveled to England and there he made a connection with a similar organization, where he wrote a circular that here, in Czechoslovakia there was an entire number of endangered children whom it was necessary to get to England. He looked for people that would be willing to take some child in. I don't know why, but age-wise it was limited from 10 to 16, I think. My sister was 16 and a half, so didn't meet the conditions and I was supposed to go in her place.

When I was leaving, there was nary a mention of her going too. By sheer chance she managed to leave on the next transport, and all because she attended a German high school. Our parents sent her there so that she'd learn to read and write German properly. In 1934 some girl from Germany joined their class, whose father, a journalist, was jailed in a concentration camp. My sister became friends with her, and she used to come to our place to visit, and in the summer would go with us to our summer apartment. Her mother was a children's doctor, and after they released her father

from the concentration camp, the entire family left for England.

When I arrived in England, they were waiting for me at the train station. Later it dawned on me that it must have been they who made it possible for my sister to come. Because the condition for the children's transports was that each child had to have a place to stay. And because that lady was a doctor and my sister arrived in England and already had it arranged that she'd immediately begin studying at a hospital to be a nurse, she must apparently have been the one to have arranged it. So my sister arrived right on the next transport after mine.