

Kitty Peterson And Her Parents



These are my parents Bedrich Teltscher and Hertha Teltscherova [nee Abelesova] with my sister Kitty Peterson [nee Teltscherova] in Shanghai in the 1940s. My father was called to the emigration office in 1940 and told to leave the Protectorate [Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia] and the Reich within one week. I don't know why this happened, but it certainly saved our lives. I was talking with my father about it later, and he said he also didn't know why. My father was a very charitable man, and I think that sometime he had probably helped someone, who later got a special position with the Germans and then helped us in return. It wasn't easy to leave the Protectorate after the beginning of World War II. It was impossible to get a visa to any of the allied states if you were in the German area. There was only one place in the world where it was possible to go with a J-passport - Shanghai. All you needed was some money. I don't know, there may have been organized transports to Shanghai, but my parents went individually. We got the money from my father's brothers who had already gone to England. We took a train to Opatija, Italy, and waited there for the boat to Shanghai, which only went once a month. So we were there for nearly a month. During that time I was very lucky because I received a student certificate to study in Palestine - I got it from my uncle Richard, who got it in England for me. He sent it to Italy by post. So I had the opportunity to study in Palestine, which was better than going to the ghetto in Shanghai. Palestine was a British mandate and I couldn't go there with the J-passport. However, somebody told us that there was an old German consul in Fiume, who was very kind and gave passports without a 'J' to Jews. I went there with my father. We told him that I had crossed the border illegally to Yugoslavia and then to Italy and he really gave me the new passport. I went to Jerusalem to study biology, and my parents went to Shanghai with my sister. I don't know much about my parents' life in Shanghai because we weren't in touch for a long time. I know they didn't have an easy life there. My mother had to do everything on her own. They opened a shop with another Jewish woman. My mum baked cookies for the shop at home. The living conditions were very hard; there was no running water for example. My sister worked as a secretary in Shanghai. She met her future husband there after the war - he was a member of the merchant navy - and went to America with him. My parents went to America soon after. They had an opportunity to go back to Czechoslovakia, but they finally decided to go to the USA. And I'm really happy about that because it was a hard life here during the communist times. My sister first worked as a secretary in

America. Then she had a daughter, Janice, and stayed at home with her. She lives in a village near San Francisco now.