

Frantisek Lauscher



This photo is from 1938, and was taken in Dobris, where we had a summer apartment rented. On the right is my uncle Frantisek Lauscher, and I'm the little child in the middle.

My father had a brother, Frantisek, who was two years older than he. He graduated from university in chemistry, but I don't know exactly when and where. He worked as a chemist in yeast production. He lived in Prague, but often traveled abroad on business. I remember him as a very pleasant person; I liked him very much and we were close also due to the fact that he didn't have a family of his own.

Frantisek was no loner. He had a serious relationship, but in the end she married someone else. She was a big prewar Communist, and she married a person of the same convictions. They ran away from the Germans to Russia, where they however sent them to the Gulag in Siberia. In the Gulag they were supposed to fell trees or something similarly physically demanding, but because they were both chemists, they were able to distil alcohol from the small sugar rations and some herbs. That was excellent for the guards, so they exempted them from hard labor. So they had a relatively decent position in the Gulag.

Another of Frantisek's girlfriends died in a car accident. Then he had another girlfriend that he used to see, but he never started a family. I remember that he spoke Czech. I think that over the course of the First Republic the entire family switched to Czech.

Grandma and Grandpa Katz, Uncle Frantisek and Grandma Kohnova were the first to be transported to Terezin. Uncle Frantisek, who worked in the bakery in Terezin, swapped shifts with someone so that he could come and greet us. He risked his life, and already during the trip from the train station he contacted my father and gave him some advice on how to act when entering Terezin. We managed to crawl under some rope somewhere, so we did pass through the shloiska [quarantine], but not the luggage inspection. And so everything that we had with us, we got in like

this.