

Vera Munkova



This is a picture of my cousin Vera Munkova [née Polakova], the daughter of my uncle Bedrich Polak, in Jicin at our grandparents'. The picture was taken in the 1920s. Vera got married before the war, and soon afterwards, her husband was summoned to the AK AK [short for 'Arbeitskolonne' / 'Work Column?']. Vera decided to go to Terezin voluntarily to be with him. In Terezin, thanks to Vera's husband, we got a tiny room, this little cubbyhole, where we relatives could live - I with my mother, my sister Eva, Vera, her sister and mother. We were six relatives living together, we were extremely lucky that Vera's husband was from the AK, so he arranged this room for us. The room was relatively puny, on top of our suitcases we laid the straw mattresses that we slept on at night, and during the day we shoved them against the wall. The room was full of bedbugs, it was terribly unpleasant. One night my cousin and I could no longer bear it, and took our mattresses outside, where we laid them down on these small stools. We thought that we'd sleep better outside, and that the bedbugs wouldn't torment us. We didn't improve our lot very much, however, because someone poured a bedpan out the window above us right onto where we were sleeping... As I say, there was no shortage of excitement in Terezin! My cousin Vera survived the war, but her husband died during a death march. After the war Vera remarried and had three children - Jana, Hanka and Petr. Jan Munk, her oldest son, is the director of the Terezin Memorial.