

Josef Weiner Out For A Walk



This is a picture of my brother, Josef Weiner, at about the age of 19, out for a walk in Prague. Pepik, as we used to call him, wanted to attend a business academy on Resslova Street, but the situation was already bad, so he didn't get in. My father was afraid that he might have to join the army, so they sent my brother to Ringhoffer, to Tatra, to apprentice as an auto mechanic. After the war he became the youngest master mechanic there. My brother Josef left in November 1941 on the second transport to Terezin, AK2, or "Arbeitskommando." From that time on we didn't have any news of him, because the men from AK1 and AK2 weren't allowed to write home. When someone wrote home, they were shot. I, along with my parents, went on the transport in April 1942. The assembly point in Holesovice, by the Veletrzní Palace, where we waited for about three days for the train to Terezin, was horrible. We were all gathered in this huge hall, which is no longer there today, where there was absolutely nothing, just columns along the sides. Everyone got a mattress to lie on. As far as toilets and washing facilities go, they were catastrophic. After about three days, a train took us to Bohusovice, where the tracks ended, because the spur line to Terezin hadn't been built yet. So we walked from Bohusovice to Terezin, and dragged our luggage along. I remember that as soon as we arrived, some guys I didn't know were calling out my name, "Liduska" and immediately started helping me with my suitcase. They were guys who worked for the "Transportleitung" helping the arrivals with their luggage. They recognized me right away, even though they'd never seen me before, as I supposedly looked a lot like my brother, who was already in Terezin. My brother Pepik was living with them in the Sudeten barracks. At first my brother Pepik worked in the "Hundertschaft" which was 100 guys that helped people with their luggage upon arrival. Then he went to work in the barracks, where they were sorting things from stolen suitcases. His boss was SS-Scharführer Rudolf Haindl. The work consisted of sorting luggage contents - food was put in one place, clothing in another, and so on. Pepik was clever, and so a couple of times it happened that during the sorting he'd for example come across a shaving brush that he'd screw apart and find money hidden inside. However that was handed in, because what good would money have done us in Terezin?