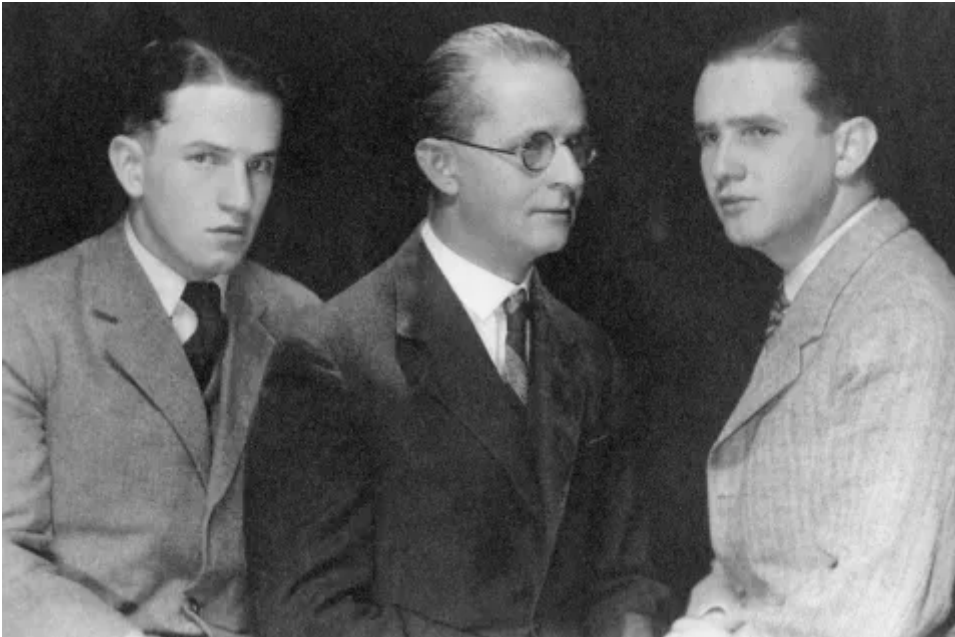


Arnost Korbel With His Sons, Jan And Josef



This is a photograph of my grandfather Arnost Korbel, and his two sons, Josef on the left, and Jan on the right. It was taken in the 1920s. My grandfather began his career with the railway. But he didn't like it, so he soon found a different job, selling wood. Slowly, very slowly he worked his way up, until he was able to buy shares in a quarry in Litice. That helped him a lot, the family was then much better off materially, and they moved to Prague, where he owned a wholesale construction materials business. He supplied all the material for the building of the Jirasek Bridge across the Vltava River. The son standing on Grandpa's left is my uncle Josef Korbel. He was the youngest son of my grandparents, and so was sent to study. He did relatively well, he graduated from law and then embarked on a diplomatic career; before World War II he worked as an attaché in Belgrade. During the war he lived as an émigré in Great Britain, and was very involved in the activities of the Czechoslovak political émigré community; he led the Czech broadcasting of the Voice of The Free Republic. He also continued in his diplomatic career after the war ended, this time as an ambassador, again in Belgrade. But he didn't sit well with the Communist regime, and evidently neither did he have the desire to stay in a totalitarian state, which is why he emigrated. His daughter also devotes her time to diplomacy, she's the former American Minister of Foreign Affairs, Madeleine Albright. And finally, the uncle standing on my grandfather's right is my uncle Jan. Jan helped Grandpa with the wholesale business. Grandpa sent him to America for work experience. When the political situation in Czechoslovakia began to get tense at the end of the 1930s, Grandpa sold the business and split the proceeds between his three children. My uncle then left for England to found a construction materials factory, his family went to join him, and then they stayed there. When during the war London was bombed, and so many people lost the roof above their heads, it was necessary to build quickly, and so my uncle Jan invented 'panelaky' [prefab apartment blocks]. You could build them quickly. So my uncle Jan has all of these eyesores here on his conscience. In England, however, they took it as a temporary measure, and have long since torn them down. It's only we that still have these blots on the landscape.