

Lolli

In Prostejov near the castle there are two big old mansions. You can still see that they are well built and were once magnificent. One of the buildings used to belong to my family. The other one belonged to the Springer family, Jews like us. At that time, as far as I recall, the Springer family were not doing too well. Mrs. Springer was an elderly woman, thin and nervous, and her elderly husband, who had a white beard and pince-nez glasses, looked as if he were both physically and mentally ill. With them lived their daughter Lolli – Lollinka who was about the same age as my mother. She was single and an intellectual who paid no attention to her appearance. There was a word in German for such women – Blaustrumpf (a blue-socking). For me Lollinka was first of all a member of the Jewish community, a neighbor of my grandparents a childhood friend of my mother's. In our house there were a few tiny photographs of the period of my parents' youth in a drawer: my parents with their friends, among them Lolli - playing tennis. My father: very handsome.

Suddenly in 1941 a short time before we were deported to Theresienstadt, my parents decided, that I should improve my knowledge of German. They sent me to private lessons with Lollinka to learn German grammar, which I wasn't familiar with, because I learned in a Czech school. I had German lessons twice a week with mixed feelings. Entering the square was forbidden to Jews at that time, so I had to go to Lolli through the back yard. Lolli, small, thin, bespectacled, usually wore a long, shapeless, old tennis dress. I felt her loneliness. Sometimes we would chat during the lesson. When the transports drew closer I felt Lolli's excitement in the face of a journey to an unknown destination. She would tell me about the preparations she was making, and I felt that she was looking forward to an adventure, which would change her monotonous empty life. To this day I remember the pity I felt for her.

Lolli and her parents went with us to Theresienstadt. From there Lolli continued eastwards to her death.