

The Ginz Family On A Sunday Walk



This picture was taken in Prague in 1939. From the right there is my brother Petr, our father Otto Ginz, mother Marie Ginzova and I. The picture was taken by some street photographer. We were probably on our Sunday walk in Stromovka Park and behind us you can see the entrance to the Exhibition Grounds where different exhibitions used to take place. My father was born in the year 1896 in Zdanice near Prague. As opposed to my mother, my father was a withdrawn and strict person, and didn't show his feelings, though I know that he liked my brother and me very much. His life's hobby was membership in the Esperanto movement, and during an international congress of this movement that took place in Prague he met my mother, who was also a passionate Esperantist. My mother would tell that when she saw my father, she thought that he was a Spaniard, because he was a little on the darker side. Because everyone spoke in Esperanto, you couldn't tell who was from where. But then, when they got to know each other more and spoke a bit, it came out that they were both Czechs. Their marriage took place in Prague at the city hall. My mother was born in Cibuz, near Hradec Kralove, in 1898. My mother grew up in the country and then in Hradec Kralove, where she went to a commerce-oriented high school and then worked as a secretary at an insurance company. She also took German and French at school. At home they spoke Czech. Our mother was much more open and approachable than our father. My mother had many interests, all sorts of intellectual ones, but she also used to go to gymnastics. My brother was named Petr Ginz and was born in 1928 in Prague. Our childhood was more or less the same. Petr was two years older and I loved him very much. He had his bar mitzvah in the Maisel Synagogue in Prague, I remember that afterwards there was a small celebration at home with relatives, and a chocolate cake. Petr was a talented boy, and when Jews were no longer being accepted at high school, my parents put him in a school named the Experimental School, in Nusle. It was a special school for talented children where they were attempting to teach with not completely conventional methods. Our parents thought that here his talent would take root and develop. But soon after they threw Petr out of this school as well, because of his Jewish origin. I was born in Prague in the year 1930. Since then not much has changed in Prague, that is, modern technology has of course changed things a lot, there are many more cars driving around and the metro. But as far as streets

and buildings go, they're the same streets, the same buildings, the same Vltava River, that I knew as a child.