

Emil Polak With His Daughter Eva Liskova



This is my sister Eva Liskova [nee Polakova] with our father, Emil Polak, in Proseč visiting our father's brother Bedřich. The photo is from the 1930s, shortly thereafter the situation in Czechoslovakia began to be bad. I remember realizing that the situation was bad when they annexed the Sudetenland. People who up to then had been closet Fascists suddenly showed their true colors, and that was quite a big shock for us. But I've also got to say that at home in Luze the situation was a little different, in that Jews, as a quite strong community, had lived there for generations, and there weren't any problems. We'd always associated with non-Jews as well, no one differentiated there. For example, when Jews were ordered to turn in animals and other things, the Czech police chief, some Mr. Burian, came to notify us ahead of time. Mr. Burian came ahead of time and warned us that they had a confiscation order, so that we'd have time to hide valuables with friends where they'd be safe. Almost everything was being confiscated: valuables, jewels, gold, furs, dishes, carpets, cars, bicycles, radios, dogs, cats, household animals. So thanks to the warning, we were for example able to hide our furs with friends, and turned in these horrible old ratty moth-eaten furs ? when you touched them, clouds of vermin would rise from them. Or we for example turned in our bicycles, but this policeman, Burian, came after the war and brought our bicycles back. He was an awfully decent and honorable man. What's ironical is that they somehow forgot to confiscate our car. Because we had a four-seater Praga-Piccolo convertible. It was a very beautiful car, a light coffee color with black fenders. Riding around in a car like that as a little girl was a huge experience for me! The roof was taken down for the summer, for the winter it was put back up, the windows were of mica, so you couldn't see much through them, we could see only

forward. When my father used to go on vacation to Slovakia with friends, he always took our Pragovka. To make up for the fact that we'd stayed at home, our father would send us one or even two postcards a day from various towns in Slovakia! For some reason the Germans forgot to confiscate our car, and as we later found out, our car was taken by partisans during the war. After the war someone advised my mother that she should ask for compensation, but she refused, with the words that if our Pragovka served a good cause, for partisans, there's no way she'd ask for any compensation. What's more, she herself didn't know how to drive, my father was no longer alive, and we were moving to Prague. To this day I still occasionally run into similar Praga Picollo cars on the streets of Prague, now they drive tourists around in them on sightseeing tours, and I always say: ?Hello Picollino!?