

Chava Pressburger's Class Portrait



This is a picture of my class at the Jewish elementary school in Prague. It was the last school year, 1941/1942, before we had to leave the school because of our Jewish origin. You can see that we all have a Jewish star on our clothes. I'm in the second row from the top, the fourth from the left. Both my brother Petr and I grew up at home. We started our school attendance at the Jewish elementary school in Prague on Jachymova Street. I think that my favorite subject at school was drawing. Outside of school we didn't have any private tutors, but we both regularly attended the gym, which I liked a lot. My girlfriends from elementary school were in a similar situation as I, all came from well-to-do Jewish families and our childhood was very happy. Besides my Jewish classmates I don't remember any friends outside of school. In our home it was important that the children pay attention to their responsibilities and that all was in order. In the morning we rose, the maid prepared breakfast and then Petr and I would walk by ourselves to school. In those days there weren't very many cars about and the streets were safe for us. We lived at Tesnov, close to Hlavkuv Bridge. It was a beautiful walk; on winter mornings the gas lamps would still be lit and the snow would crunch under our feet. School was in the morning, I usually finished earlier than Petr and my mother would be waiting for me in front of the school. Then we would have lunch at home; only our father was in the office and came home later. After lunch our mother would go lie down and we would do our homework; in those days there wasn't much of it. Then we would play a bit at home, and then go out for a walk, usually with the maid. Often we would go to Stvanice, which is an island in Prague, there we would toboggan or play with a ball, and when it was warm, you could bathe in the Vltava there. And in the winter we would again go to the Vltava, to skate; the river froze over regularly and we would skate from Hlavkuv Bridge to the weir and back again. Sometimes we would go skating to the arena on Stvanice, but there you had to pay. They had music playing there and you would skate round and round. We would go shopping to the market at Ovocny Trh. I remember how there would be old women sitting there, selling pats of butter and cheese, and would let us have a taste, which I liked to do very much. The butter would then be kept in the pantry, in cold water. We would also have fruit preserves or sauerkraut stored there. When we returned from our walk, it was suppertime, and then Petr and I would like to read, there really wasn't any other form of entertainment. Reading was our main hobby.