Eva Duskova

Eva Duskova
Prague
Czech Republic
Interviewer: Zuzana Strouhova
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Mrs. Eva Duskova lives in Prague with her husband Milan Dusek, with whom she has two children. She is a very friendly and hospitable lady, who looks at life with dispassion and humor. Despite her Jewish origins and anti-communist sentiments, she has been lucky in life and survived Terezin 1, Auschwitz and Lenzing, and during the Communist regime was able to work in her field, which wasn't common. She spent her entire productive life working as a librarian at various academic institutions in Prague. Despite the fact that she is of retirement age and has undergone hip surgery, she still works – she is the head of the library at the Terezin Initiative 2 Institute. She is a practicing Jew, but not Orthodox.

My family background

My grandpa on my father's side was named Julius Frey. He was immensely understanding, and gave me what he could, that is in a spiritual sense. Instead of fairy-tales he would tell me Bible stories, in a very interesting fashion. I was capable of sitting and listening to him for hours on end. He was born on 1st April 1866 in Dolni Kounice, near Brno. He graduated from high school, but where exactly I don't know. His mother tongue was Czech together with German, because he came from Brno. In and around Brno, German was spoken a lot. He spoke only Czech with me, but you could tell that his foundations were German. But he wasn't a German, though he had a German name. This is because Josef II 3 gave Jews various rights, and in exchange they had to take various German names. And I've heard that the name Frey or Frei perhaps meant free, that he wasn't of some, let's say, subservient standing.

I have no idea when he left Dolni Kounice to go work, no one ever told me that. Neither did I ever ask about it, of course. He worked for the railway, as a stationmaster, and probably for no one else. He worked in various places, amongst them also in Pardubice, where my father, Viktor Frey, was born, in Dobrovice near Mlada Boleslav and for sure somewhere else as well, but I don't remember any more. Their housekeeper Marie told me it all, but I can't remember. Then with my grandma Hermina, nee Breitenfeldova, he moved to Litomysl to retire. Because my grandma was originally

from Litomysl, and at that time her mother and brother still lived there. Her family owned a quite prominent apartment building there, a corner building in Renaissance style across from City Hall, so in the middle of the square. Their living room was located where at one time Jirasek's Father German President lived. [German President (1780–1895): a seminary school teacher, familiar from 'A Philosophical History' by Alois Jirasek.] What's more, it was the only room in the entire building that had a cross-vaulted ceiling. Several generations of my grandmother's ancestors lived in that building. But at that time my mother's sister Marie [Sgallova, nee Fingerova] was also getting married, and my mother's father, Rudolf Finger, had a two-family house built for them, a villa. And that's where my mother and her sister lived, both of them with their families.

As I've said, my grandma and grandpa had a housekeeper, she was named Marie Kucerova. You see, my grandmother had a serious case of diabetes, and so wasn't able to take care of things very much. The housekeeper, she was my savior of sorts, because after the war she took care of me, and told me a lot about my father, who had died in a concentration camp. [The interviewee's father actually died in Terezin ghetto.] My parent's family also had a servant. Apparently we had had several of them, but I remember only Anca. She had this little room at our place. My mother took care of me, the servants mostly took care of housecleaning and the laundry. My mother also cooked.

Whether my grandfather on my father's side was in the army, I can't say, because I remember my grandpa on my father's side only in a railway uniform. That is, I remember photos of him in a railway uniform. But at least as far as I can remember, no one talked about the war there. But I have this feeling that he was in World War I. My mother's father was in it for sure. My grandpa died during World War II, on 28th April 1943 in Terezin, where he had been taken on the Litomysl transport on 2nd December 1942. He died of old age and due to his prostate, which was of course badly medically treated.

My grandfather was one of six siblings. There were, I think, five brothers and one sister, Anna. She never married, and stayed in Dolni Kounice near Brno in that family cottage of theirs. It was this little cottage that had one fancy room – this big, perhaps somewhat better-furnished room – then one small room and a scullery. It wasn't a very big place, though they did have a beautiful apricot orchard. And there in those cramped quarters my grandpa's parents raised six children. I don't know any more than that about my grandpa's parents, only that Grandpa's father reputedly made a living by lending money.

I never asked about Anna Frey's education or about her work, and as far as I can remember, no one ever talked about it. She lived alone in Dolni Kounice, childless. During the year she would go and visit Grandma and Grandpa and we used to go stay with her during summer vacation. It was our favorite place for holidays. Because we wouldn't have all fit in there, we used to stay in a nearby hotel. Anna was this typical old maid, but was very kind. In that fancy room she had a musical picture, which she would play for me when I was very good. What was on it, I don't know, it was simply some picture, apparently you would wind it up and then it would play.

I also remember that we used to go swimming in a nearby river, and that I used to play there with the local children, Saturday or not. [Editor's note: Jewish religious law forbids during Saturday, the Sabbath, a fundamental 39 activities that are included in the Talmud, and other activities that stem from them. Among them belongs also swimming.] And because my father already owned a car in

those days, he would sometimes load us up and take us to Brno. Anna died in Terezin, but I can't tell you off the top of my head when, one could find that out in the Terezin Memorial Book.

My grandpa's youngest brother was Josef, who lived in Vienna – it's not far from Brno, evidently he went there to find work and then stayed there. His son Michael, by the way, lives in Sweden to this day. I don't know when Josef was born, and there's no way I'll find out now. But I do remember that he died on my grandpa's birthday, 1st April. But I also don't know the year, evidently at the beginning of the war or right before it began. What sort of work he had in Vienna, that I don't know, I never met him. Josef was married, I don't know his wife's name, I only know that she was born in Auschwitz, apparently it used to be quite a decent little town in Poland. They had two sons together, one, who's since died, was around the same age as my mother, Marketa Fingerova – she was born in 1909 – and was named Eli, evidently as in Elias. The younger one, who was born in 1922, is named Michael and lives in Sweden. He got there in a very interesting fashion. My grandfather's brother Josef somehow got mixed up in politics and when the Schuschnigg [4] affair in Vienna took place, which was some sort of political revolution, he somehow paid the price for that. But those are just childhood memories, after the war no one could tell me about it any longer.

Josef soon became a widower. He was left alone with two sons, and in the end committed suicide. His older son Eli emigrated, evidently to Palestine. They sent the younger one, who was 15 at the time, to Litomysl to stay with his grandfather and grandmother. The family then simply decided, that to secure his life and livelihood, they'll send him to the Palestine, to be with his brother. However he didn't meet up with his brother during the entire time of the war – even though they were both looking for each other, they didn't find each other. Even though they were both in the same army, the English army, and both of them fought at Tobruk [5]. It wasn't until the war ended, that Michl – that's how we called Michael – came to some army office on army business, but where it was I don't know, and there he saw his brother. It wasn't until then that they first met. Michael then met his wife-to-be at some railway station; her parents had saved her by sending her to Sweden. How it exactly continued I don't know. I think that they both returned to Palestine, apparently to her family. But then they had two children there and one of the children somehow couldn't stand the climate, so due to the fact that she was already used to living in Sweden, they moved there. There Michl worked at a newspaper, but I think that it's more likely that he did some sort of better type of work. I think in administration.

Another of Grandpa's brothers, Arnold, also lived in Vienna. Him I remember from Terezin, he and his wife were very kind to me there. What he did in Vienna, I don't know, but I think that he didn't make it that far there. Back then he went to Terezin on the Vienna transport along with his wife. I don't know anything at all about her, not even her name, only that she was very kind. I really didn't get to know them until when they were going to visit my father at the hospital, when my father's life was ending. I think that she was Austrian, because they spoke only German with her. I don't even know if they had any children. His wife saved a bit of bread and some coffee grounds or something like that, and out of that they made me for my birthday – well, not a cake, but this sweet snack. Which made me very happy! So he was my favorite.

Then there was one more brother, who lived in Prague. But what his name was, I don't know. We didn't see the Prague relatives much, only once in a while, when we were in Prague, we'd visit them. Whether they had ever been to Litomysl, that I don't know. I think that he was a merchant and that he had a daughter or perhaps two daughters, who had emigrated to somewhere in

Scotland. But I don't know their names, I know nothing of their fates. They were probably in Terezin as well, but I really don't know anything about them. And I think that my grandpa had one more brother, but I don't know anything at all about him.

My grandmother on my father's side was named Hermina, nee Breitenfeldova. She was born on 12th September 1875 in Litomysl. She died on 15th December 1943 in Auschwitz, where she went on the December transport. My grandma was very kind, but was a bit of a lackluster type of person. I've got the impression that I get it from her. And as opposed to my grandpa, she didn't know how to tell stories and fairy-tales. I don't know what sort of education she had, and as far as work goes, she was probably a housewife. Later, though, she ran Uncle Karel's, her unmarried brother's, textile store in Litomysl for him. You see, Uncle Karel was a bohemian, a singer, and devoted himself more to singing than to business. So my father's mother was basically a businesswoman, though a bad businesswoman. She gave things to people on credit and never wanted them to pay it off. She'd say, 'You'll give it to me when you have it.' Well, I think that for the most part they never did give it to her.

That textile store, as I've said, belonged to her brother Karel, but he didn't devote himself to it very much. It wasn't proper for a child from a good family to devote himself to professional singing. So at least for appearances' sake, he was a businessman – those were the mores of those days – but in reality he was a member and evidently a soloist in the Vlastimil choir, which performed at the Litomysl Theater and likely also elsewhere, but that I don't know. Uncle Karel died when I was eight, so still before the war, in 1938. He also sang the role of the jail warden in Dalibor [opera by Bedrich Smetana], when the National Theater performed Dalibor in Litomysl. So one could say that he was a good singer, supposedly he was.

As far as Judaism goes, our family, especially on my father's side, was religiously inclined, believers. Perhaps not Orthodox [see Orthodox communities] 6, the way it's now propagated here [in Prague], which I don't really like. For the most part they were assimilated Jews, who though practiced their religion.

My grandpa was very religious and so were his siblings. For example, his sister Anna, the one that lived in Kounice near Brno, was very particular about observing holidays and all of these things, and was even very proud of the fact that our family came from the Kohanim lineage. [Editor's note: priests, members of the Levi tribe, descendants of Aaron and his sons, who were entrusted with the performance of holy rituals in the Tent of Meeting and the Temple, Hebrew Kohen, Kohanim.] Once she said to me, 'Eva dear, remember that you're a princess.' That's the only thing I remember her telling me. My father's brother was also very devout. Because he didn't have his own family, he celebrated the holidays with us. My grandpa's family was in general quite religiously inclined, at his parents' place, the ones in Kounice near Brno, they as far as I know kept kosher and apparently also had two sets of dishes [see Kashrut in eating habits] 7. But otherwise they didn't visibly, by how they dressed, differ from the non-Jewish population, even they, though religious, were very assimilated. What's more, the kippah wasn't perhaps even worn back then yet, to be sure though, a hat, that was of course worn at all times.

My grandma and grandpa never picked their friends only from among Jews. What's more, my very religious grandfather played tarot every Saturday afternoon with the catechist Mr. Letfus. Certainly one didn't try to convince the other of anything. You know the joke: The priest says to the rabbi,

‘When will you finally try a bit of pork?’ And he says, ‘At your wedding.’

My mother’s family, on the other hand, practiced Judaism only half-heartedly. I’d say that my grandma and grandpa on my mother’s side attended the synagogue for social reasons; at their place we never celebrated holidays. As far as I know, they didn’t even ever light candles for Sabbath. We never ever discussed God with them, either. And I think that my grandma’s brother Karel wasn’t very religiously inclined either. But in his case I can’t really say one way or the other. My mother, herself, was less religious than my father. For example she would easily let me write on Saturday [Jewish religious law forbids during Saturday, the Sabbath, a fundamental 39 activities that are included in the Talmud, and other activities that stem from them. Among them belongs also writing, for example]. She took part in all religious rituals more from a sense of moral responsibility, and not so much out of belief. Her sister Marie and her husband also attended the synagogue more for social reasons, so as not to demean themselves socially. I even remember that my uncle, Otto Sgall, once got very upset when they called him to the Torah. Apparently he didn’t want or know how to read the Torah, and didn’t want to demean himself, because he as a factory owner felt himself to be a part of the upper crust. He was, you see, the owner of a wholesale textile business.

My grandfather on my mother’s side was named Rudolf Finger. He was born on 26th February 1877 in Kozolupy in the Pilsen region. His mother tongue was German, because he was from around Pilsen. There they used to speak German. But likely they considered themselves to be Czechs. I’ve got this impression that during the 1929 or 1930 census [the 1930 census] he identified himself as being of Czech nationality. With me he always spoke Czech. He was the only one about whom I know for certain that he fought in World War I, but I have no clue as to where or when, or any other details. As opposed to my father’s father, who was a bureaucrat body and soul, my grandfather was body and soul a businessman. He was a trained merchant, kitchen goods and hardware, and he made a living as storekeeper – he had a hardware store. For a time he lived in Ceska Lipa, where my mother and her siblings were born. Probably back then there was some business opportunity there. Not long after, though, they moved back to Litomysl. I don’t know whether they didn’t do well in Ceska Lipa, or why, but for some reason they simply weren’t happy there. In any case they moved long before he retired, because he still had the store in Litomysl up to the beginning of the war, before they confiscated it. When World War II broke out, grandma and grandpa went on the September [1943] transport to Terezin, at least I think so. Well, and they both ended up in Auschwitz on 7th March 1944.

Grandpa Rudolf had several siblings. I know that there was some Aunt Emily and definitely someone else, but they lived all the way over in the Pilsen region, which was quite far.

My grandmother on my mother’s side was named Irma Fingerova, nee Ledererova. She was born on 23rd May 1884 and died together with my grandpa in Auschwitz on that day of 7th March 1944. She was likely born in Litomysl, because that branch of the family had deep roots there. On the distaff side. Her mother tongue was Czech; there everyone spoke Czech, even though they of course all knew German. She lived in Litomysl the entire time, except for those several years in Ceska Lipa, which she spent there with her husband and where my mother was born.

My grandma had been educated at a convent, even though she was of course also Jewish. She lost her father early on, you see, and my great-grandmother had to take care of her and another five

children together with her childless sister. So they put Irma, as the oldest daughter, into a convent to be brought up. I don't know where, I only know that there she learned various beautiful handiworks and homemaking. She knitted, embroidered, crocheted, made lacework and I don't know what else. Whether or not they tried to instill something of Christianity in her, I have no clue, I wasn't interested in that back then. By the way, this grandma of mine was very, very intelligent and she had been seeing some doctor. But back then she wasn't allowed to marry him, because his mother wouldn't allow him to marry my grandmother: for my grandma was from a quite poor family and didn't get anything as a dowry. So she basically married my grandfather by virtue of necessity.

My grandfather was very strict and authoritarian, I think that something of the soldier remained in him, and my grandmother basically bore with him. She was among other things also an amazing psychologist. I remember one time, when sometime at the beginning of the war the parents of my cousin Milan Sgall had to go take care of some visa or other matters, apparently to Prague. Basically, when Milan had his birthday on 5th May, they weren't there. Grandma Irma resolved the situation by taking him to a store and buying him something, some gift, but what I don't know any more. So that I wouldn't feel sorry for myself, she bought me some trifle as well. However my grandpa was very frugal and took my grandma to task for buying me something when it wasn't my birthday. I think that this accurately portrays the mentality of those two people.

As I've said, Grandma Irma came from a family of six children, of which she was the oldest. She had two brothers, Jan and Karel, and three sisters, Zdenka [affectionate for Zdena], Terezie and Olga. All of them died in Auschwitz, you could find out the dates in the Terezin Memorial Book.

Uncle Jenik – that's what they called him, my mother's brother Jan was Jenda and Grandma's brother Jan was Jenik – was an invalid from World War I. He and his wife Ruzena had a clothing store in Litomysl. They were however childless. But I don't remember them very much, although in Litomysl we lived along the same arcade, and visited each other. Maybe we even went on holidays together, for there were good, strong relations in that family.

Aunt Zdenka was married, but childless. They used to say something about that her husband – Dezso Adler, a Hungarian – was infected, so they couldn't have children.

The youngest son was Uncle Karel, they used to call him Karilek. He lived with his sister Olga – she was the youngest sister – in Zamberk, where they had some sort of textile factory. They actually lived on the same piece of property in adjacent buildings. Uncle Karel was married and had a son, Frantisek, who was much younger than I. They called him Ata. Well, and Olga had three daughters – Vlasta, Vera and Eva. Vlasta ended up in Auschwitz with her little boy, Petricek. And Vera and Eva survived, what's more, in a very curious fashion.

Back then Vera was married, but I don't know any more to who. Eva was single, but met a boy by the name of Freda, or Alfred. They all went to Terezin together. In Terezin Eva married that Freda and became pregnant. Vera's husband left for Auschwitz and likely also died there. Vera followed him but never saw him again. Freda and Eva also later went to Auschwitz, she wanted to be with him. But when she got there, Mengele could see that she was pregnant and immediately sent her to the other side of the chimney, if you know this terminology, or into the gas. Eva was physically very strong, so she avoided the 'chimney' and by complete chance got together with Vera, who was already there.

Then they were transferred – they were five girls in all – to the Merzdorf labor camp. [Editor's note: in Polish Marciszow, a town in Lower Silesia. During World War II one of the branches of the Gross Rosen concentration camp was located there. The camp was liberated on 8th May 1945.] Right before she had her little boy, Tomik – on 20th March 1945 – Mengele came to Merzdorf and asked her, 'Why didn't you admit that you were pregnant?' And she answered, 'I didn't know it.' But, of course, she knew. Apparently several children were born in Merzdorf, and none of them survived – except for that Tomik. When he was born, each of those five girls tore off a piece of her dress and they wrapped him in it. He was born somewhere in a bathroom or pigsty, something like that, I don't exactly know any more.

When the war ended, the Germans left and the Red Army arrived there. The girls, however, were afraid of them, so she took the little boy and walked all day, until in the evening she came to some farm, to some abandoned building. Apparently on the ground floor there was nothing, and upstairs on the first floor there was a baby carriage with baby clothing. Well, that wasn't even a coincidence; that was more like a miracle. So they immediately dressed the little boy and set off again with the carriage in the direction of home. When they got all the way to Zamberk, the communists were already in power there, and they didn't even want to let them back into their original apartment house, instead they moved them into this little bungalow. By coincidence Eva's husband Freda had also returned, along with his brother Egon, who was single, and their mother. Vera already knew that her husband wasn't going to return, she and Egon fell in love with each other, and got married.

They had horrible problems with the communists, it was quite tense. They cut off their water, they cut off their telephone and apparently also decided that as the child had actually been born in Germany [when Tomik was born, Merzdorf was part of the German Reich], that he was a German citizen, so it was necessary to expel him [see Forced displacement of Germans] 8. It cost them a lot of effort before they got him out of that somehow. In the meantime, in 1947, Eva had another son, Petr. Well, in the end they finally decided that they wanted to go somewhere as far as possible from our country. They emigrated first, to Australia, while their grandmother, Anna Jelinkova, lived for a time with us. Then she left to be with them. By the way, both girls, Eva and Vera, were already pregnant when they left for Australia, and each one of them then had one more child in Australia. Except for Freda, they all live in Australia to this day, close to Melbourne. At least I hope so, I haven't had any news from them for a long time now. And Tomik did a PhD in science, and started a family in Australia.

My grandma's last sister was Terezie, they used to call her Terusza. Terusza was married twice, as the first time she was widowed. But I know nothing about her husbands. From her first marriage she had a daughter, Lily, and from the second a son, Arne. All of them stayed in Auschwitz.

My mother and father lived from childhood in the same arcade, or better on the same side of the arcade which in Litomysl they call an 'underchamber.' My mother and my father met when my mother was five and my father 13. My mother used to go play in the store next door with a little girl who had a brother, who was friends with my father. She was Anicka Jezkova, he Frantisek. The Jezeks had a bakery and my mother played with Anicka, who was hunchbacked, on the rolling-boards. Well, and those young guys, young men, right, already 13 years old, came by, and wanted to play at being soldiers on the rolling-boards. No one dared to be nasty to Anicka, the poor hunchbacked thing, and so my father got to know my mother with the words: 'Get down from that

rolling-board, you little fucker.' My mother probably wasn't far from replying, because she was always very offhand. But I've never heard from anyone what her answer was. By the way, my father grew up to be a very refined man.

In 1928, I think, my grandpa and father went to Vienna to celebrate seder with that uncle Josef. And because both families had for a long time, for whole generations, been close, they also invited my mother and her father. Well, and in the middle of the celebration, or maybe at its end, I don't know exactly, my father ceremoniously stood up and asked my mother's father for my mother's hand. I think that my mother was taken aback, but that she had absolutely no objections to it.

What I, however, can't understand, is that their wedding was at the district government office in Litomysl, so only a civil one, which likely didn't so much bother my mother, because she wasn't as religiously inclined as my father. Why they were married like this, that's something I always wanted to ask, but never got around to, which I regret to this day. They were married in May 1929, and my mother didn't even have a white dress. They had a big betrothal, but an utterly small wedding. And after the wedding my father's mother apparently said, 'And now you're ours, and you're going to come over for lunch.' So, even the wedding banquet was at my father's parents'. Maybe because the betrothal was so 'festive,' the wedding was supposed to be only an official confirmation. But that I really don't know.

Growing up

As far as disposition goes, my father was always very democratic. My mother had to take care of me daily from morning to evening, so she had to be stricter, right? She didn't hesitate to give me a slap now and again, while my father was more dear to me, because he sometimes came home only for the weekend. And then he would very much devote himself to me. I only got one slap from him, and that only when I was already very unruly and tore his shirt on him.

My father liked to take pictures – I've inherited that from him – my mother, I think, didn't concern herself with photography. I also think that I, the same as they, like to travel. Otherwise I always admired my father's wise, serene disposition, while my mother was rather more hot-tempered, which I didn't like, I had a hard time with it. Otherwise they were both very sociable, went to the movies, theaters, to concerts and generally out into society. And society used to come to our place. We had a lot of visits. My mother was a good cook, so although usually we lived modestly, when visitors came, she would always provide a feast as it should be. They never made any distinction whether someone was a Jew or not, that's not how it was. My father had, I think, mainly intellectual friends, for example a chief judge, or dentist, lawyer. My mother adapted, and I think with relish. My grandma and grandpa, who lived in that house on the square, also visited us often. It wasn't all that far from us. Litomysl isn't a big town, and at that time had about five thousand people. [Editor's note: according to the Czech Statistics Office, the population of Litomysl during the 1921 census was 8,737, and in 1930 it was 8,638.] And perhaps even more often we'd go to their place.

My father was named Viktor Frey. He was born on 10th April 1901 in Pardubice, and died on 23rd June 1944 in Terezin. He had two university degrees: he was an engineer and had a PhD in Technical Sciences. He graduated from the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering in Prague. His mother tongue was Czech. I think that my father sympathized with the Social Democrats, with the rightist part. He wasn't a member, but had a very strong social conscience. And he was a member of an association of engineers and architects called the SIA. Otherwise, as far as I know, he wasn't

a member of any other organizations or clubs, and neither was anyone else in the family.

My father lived wherever they transferred his father, who, as I've said, worked for the railway. That housekeeper was already with my father's parents during his childhood, and she used to also tell me how it was when he was growing up, but I don't remember anything concretely. He was physically quite awkward, so he probably didn't play soccer, I don't know. Well, but he for sure used to play with his friend on the baker's rolling-boards. Otherwise he then devoted himself to his studies and science. I think that he graduated from high school in Litomysl.

He was never in the army, and this was due to health reasons: he had flat feet. After graduating from university, he at first worked as an assistant at a technical school [Czech Technical University in Prague], because he had done very well and graduated very early. But when he decided to get married, he tried to find some better-paying position. And so he transferred to Skoda 9 in Pilsen. There he worked as a mechanical engineer. Apparently he had some sort of project that he wanted to patent, and they wanted to buy it from him. But my father didn't want to sell it to them, so they got angry at him and fired him, whereupon my father looked for work for about six weeks. After six weeks someone found him a job in a steel works by the name of Isteg, in Most – apparently it doesn't exist any more. There he represented the steel works for the entire country, except for Prague, for which there was a separate representative.

At his work my father had the use of a company car, so we made plentiful use of it and used to go on various trips. Not only to Brno, but also to Zamberk and so on, we varied it a lot. Or we'd go on various hiking trips in the immediate region with my father's friends. On those occasions we'd always go to this special pub and there my parents would order beer and Olomouc 'stinky' cheese. But of course we also went and visited historical landmarks. We also traveled abroad, to Crikvenica, Yugoslavia [the town of Crikvenica is located in Croatia today]. That was in 1936. I remember that I learned to swim there – what's more I was by the sea for the first time – and that I got tonsillitis there. And that I wanted to make clothes for my dolls and my mother had only a pair of manicure scissors with her. After the war I started devoting myself to scouting and camping, so I went on trips as an adult as well. But as a child I was never at any summer camp.

My father worked at Isteg until the annexation of the Sudetenland 10. But because my father didn't want me to have to breathe the bad air in Most, we moved to be with our family in Litomysl. [Editor's note: Most used to be a town with a high concentration of heavy industry and therefore with a bad environment.] So he then commuted to Most, alternatively he communicated with them by phone, due to the fact that he actually worked all over the entire country. We lived in Litomysl up until the transport to Terezin. When the war began, my father, because he was of Jewish origin, had to work as only a laborer. But back then one of his friends, who had a chopping-machine factory, gave him a job. So back then he officially worked there as a laborer, but in reality he designed those chopping-machines for him. In time the president of the Jewish community in Litomysl died, and they named, or elected, that I don't know exactly, my father as the president of the Litomysl community. And he stayed there until the deportation.

My name is Eva Duskova, nee Freyova, and I was born in Pilsen on 22nd March 1930. Date of death still unknown. I have no siblings; I had only that one cousin Milan, who lived in the same house as I. But the fact that I was an only child was actually lucky for me, because [otherwise] I wouldn't have escaped the gas. Because in Auschwitz there was this rule, that whoever is older than 16 or at least

16 and at most 45, can volunteer for heavy labor. And the younger and older ones have to go into the gas chambers.

For the first four years I lived in Pilsen, but then we moved to Litomysl. I can say that I lived there with both parents, because my father only commuted to Most. In Litomysl I finished the first four grades, but then I couldn't attend school any more [because of the Anti-Jewish laws in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia] 14. I returned to it only after the war. I remember my first day of school. I went to the first grade with my girlfriend Anita Frankova, nee Fisherova. We had known each other since the age of four, because our parents were friends. What's more, we were actually very distantly related. To be specific, Anita's grandpa and my great-grandmother's sister were married. In fact back then we insisted on sitting next to each other in school. And in the end we did. Of course, right the next day we were separated for misbehaving. We were simply talking to each other. What the teacher was saying wasn't as interesting. But I very much looked forward to school, I was hungry for knowledge. The first day Anita and I were accompanied by our fathers. I know that the gentlemen in the back behind the desks stood beside each other, and I think that they were quite amused. I think that our fathers took it as this personal prerogative. Whether there were mothers too, that I don't remember. Very early on I went to school unaccompanied, because it was a short ways off, without any sort of danger along the way.

Anita and I were in the same class for three years, I guess. Then the Fischers moved to Prague, because they had this feeling that they'd somehow be more hidden in Prague, or protected, while we stayed in Litomysl. That was probably in 1938. Already back then they apparently had a certain feeling of danger, but why, that I didn't ask them. It didn't interest me back then. I only know that people said that they had the feeling that in Prague they won't stick out so much. But then in Prague Anita's father soon had a heart attack, I think, or something, and died – still before the war.

During the war

The deportation of Litomysl Jews took place on 3rd December 1942, first to Pardubice, and on 5th December from Pardubice to Terezin. However, as my father was the president of the Jewish community, they had to somehow shut it all down there, and so he and his immediate family, i.e. my mother and I, stayed in Litomysl for another three days. We didn't leave for Pardubice until 6th December, and from Pardubice for Terezin on 6th December with people from Pardubice. Otherwise Litomysl left with people from the countryside around Pardubice.

As I've said, Father died in Terezin. My father was quite a heavy smoker, and so didn't have a very resistant constitution. In Terezin he got into technical services, and when there was a so-called 'Kasernensperre,' meaning leaving the barracks was forbidden, he could walk outside, about the ghetto, and used those service rounds to visit his father and me. For at that time I was often ill, tonsillitis and so on, and his father was actually also nearing his end. Back then my father neglected the fact that he had the flu, and when Grandpa died, he himself took to his bed with the flu. But there was no medicine and his organism wasn't resistant enough. Then he got pleurisy and after fourteen months he died of rapid tuberculosis.

My father had a three years younger brother, Frantisek, who worked as a customs inspector at the Frydek-Mistek station. During the war, however, my uncle moved to Litomysl. He devoted himself to me very much, among other things he taught me to ride a bicycle, and so we would ride together around the surrounding villages, as far as was allowed [the given limitation applied only to

Jews]. But no one else rode with us. I had a bike from the age of eight. Back then we perhaps even took some longer routes, but on my own I didn't go that far. I rode on a bike for a long time, but more in Litomysl, in Prague not at all. Always when I arrived in Litomysl in the summer, in the morning I helped Mother, after lunch Mother took a nap and I set out by bicycle to the swimming pool. I bathed, dried myself off and rode back again. Litomysl doesn't have a public transport system, there people rode bikes a lot.

In Prague only my children ride bikes, only they had bikes here anyways. My son Petr rides his bike to this day, with his children too. Before he used to go on trips, even longer ones, with his wife. My daughter Hana doesn't ride anymore these days, and neither do I, due to a leg injury.

My uncle was single, but it was said that he was platonically in love with my mother, and perhaps said that he would get married only if he found a girl like my mother. But that couldn't happen any more, because my uncle apparently left on the first transport from Terezin to Auschwitz and there he probably remained.

My mother was named Marketa Fingerova. She was born in Ceska Lipa on 27th April 1909 and died in Litomysl on 10th October 1992. So she lived to the age of 83, which actually isn't that much, because our family was long-lived. Her mother tongue was Czech.

Apparently they however moved from Ceska Lipa to Litomysl very early on, because they were already there when my mother started attending school. She then lived for some time with my father in Pilsen, before they moved back to Litomysl, so that I wouldn't grow up in such bad environmental conditions as those in Most.

My mother went to 'family' school, where she studied, as one would say, women's work: cooking, sewing, baking, and basic household economics. Today, such schools have a three-year program, I think. I even have this feeling that at one time they were four-year programs with a diploma. But my mother had a one-year course. Back then it wasn't a complete high school education. She finished 'kvarta' [fourth of eight years of school] and then went to that family school. And then she went to the Sudetenland, to Teplice-Sanov, to study German. There she lived with some family. She never had a job anywhere, she was a housewife.

During the war she was also in Terezin, our whole family went there on that day of 6th December 1942. Because my father was the president of the Jewish community, we were somehow automatically protected during the course of his life in Terezin. But when on 23rd June 1944 he died, we immediately left on the earliest transport, the October one, to Auschwitz. We left Terezin on 12th October, and arrived in Auschwitz on 14th October. I remember that we were walking in rows of five and that coming towards us came walking – one of the lucky chances in my life – some German soldier, who told my mother to give him that wedding ring that she had on her finger. So she gave it to him, and in exchange he advised us, 'Remember, that you're older than 16 and less than 45, and volunteer for heavy labor.' My mother had my father's winter coat with her, so she threw it on me, and when we went in front of Mengele, I looked somewhat huskier. [Editor's note: What the interviewee means is that Mengele selected them himself. This is a frequent statement, although they did not know anything about Mengele at the time, and it is not even sure that it was him.] At that time I was only 14. However I do know two sisters who then went with us to the work camp, the younger one was twelve at the time and she also managed it.

We were in Auschwitz for fourteen days. On 28th October we had the feeling that we'd be going into the gas chamber, but we were lucky and we went on to Austria, to a branch of Mauthausen that was named Lenzing [a women's sub-camp of Mauthausen that provided workers for the textile industry] in Upper Austria. And there we stayed until liberation. However when exactly we were liberated, that's an example of how memories differ. I was and still am convinced that we were liberated on 6th May 1945 by the American army. My friends, two sisters with whom we had gone there at the same time back then, are convinced that we were liberated on 4th May. But I'm convinced I'm right. And so are they.

What impressions do I have from wartime? I remember that during the [September 1938] mobilization 15, my father's brother, my Uncle Frantisek, returned very downhearted when they called the mobilization off. Then I remember my father saying – at that time he was already president of the Jewish community – that I'm not allowed to play with the local girls. By the way, in Litomysl there was this one family, a working-class family, he was I think a carpenter or something like that, and very much a social democrat, a very honorable person. Every time he met him, my father, though he had two academic degrees, bowed deeply to him. And this family – very simple, but of very precious character – used to send my classmate, Bozenka, to our house to play with me. Her parents simply told her, 'If you were friends with Eva before, you have to be friends with her again.' And she really did come over to our place, up until we left. After the war we met up again in high school in the same class, and we're friends to this day. When I go to Litomysl, we visit each other.

Some of the other children shunned me. I remember that we weren't allowed to go to the swimming pool, and so we would go to the outskirts of town to this little brook and there we would bathe. It bothered me very much that I couldn't go to school. Various restrictions, like what we could buy, that I basically didn't even notice, because our mother was very capable and rustled up all sorts of things. In various illicit ways, and we also knew a lot of people that lived out in the countryside. Even wearing a star [see Yellow star – Jewish star in Protectorate] 16 didn't leave any sort of impression on me, we later associated only amongst each other, so it didn't really occur to me. On the other hand it bothered me that we had to hand over radios. That we also had to hand over some jewelry, that didn't really affect me, and I think that my mother gave it all to friends for safekeeping. She couldn't give it to our housekeeper, because up until out transport she lived with my grandma and grandpa in one apartment. However, when the door closed on my grandma, she took what she could from that apartment and hid it, and after the war she gradually handed it over to us.

I also remember, that when there was the Heydrichiade 17, I was alone at home with my mother, my father was probably somewhere at work. These two gentlemen rang at the door and were showing us pictures of a bicycle, briefcases and I don't know what else. And I said, 'Look mommy, my daddy has this briefcase.' My mother got terribly angry at me, and said that I was making things up. [Editor's note: after their successful attack on Reinhard Heydrich, the assassins got rid of evidence. The Gestapo then began an investigation, in which they also used photos of the evidence.]

Otherwise, I think that I was a fairly good child. I remember perhaps one exception, when I wanted to hit my four and a half years younger cousin Milan with an axe. He wasn't doing anything to me at the time, there was simply this axe here, and he was standing there...well, I simply saw it there,

and so I felt this need to use it. And I couldn't understand why my father was angry at me. I was six at the time.

I also remember that Anita [Frankova] and I met up in Terezin. We were both in one room in the so-called 'Mädchenheim' [German for 'girls' home']. Back then my parents arranged for me to get into it. When we arrived in Terezin, we were at first in a so-called 'schloiska.' [Editor's note: schloiska, from the German 'Schleuse': first building into which arrivals were herded and where they were stripped of all valuables.] That was for about three days. Then they moved us, men and women with children separately, but there were quite harsh conditions there.

Well, Anita was already in that Mädchenheim, so we lived there together, up until Anita and her mother were sent to Auschwitz in December 1943. I went there with my mother almost a year later. After the war we found out from some 'guaranteed' sources, from someone, who reputedly saw with his own eyes, that Anita and her mother went into the gas, but it wasn't true. Back then they went from Auschwitz to somewhere in Belarus, but where, I can't exactly remember. And there they were liberated in a quite interesting fashion by the Red Army. Actually, before the Red Army arrived, the Germans tried to shoot them all, and Anita and her mother somehow fainted. Or something like that. So the Germans thought that they were finished. But they still hit Anita's mother in the head with a rifle butt. Well, and then the Soviet army liberated them, only that they mixed them up with German prisoners and transferred them to a Gulag 18 camp. Well, you know, the Red Army.

Sometime right before Christmas Anita sent a message from her aunt's in Prague, because they had let her and, I think, a couple of other children out of that Gulag earlier and for the time being left her mother there. I only know that at Christmastime in 1945 Anita was already at our place in Litomysl for the holidays. She then returned to Prague to go to high school. Her mother returned from the Soviet Union about a half year after her. But in 1950 Anita's mother suddenly began to have headaches and after some time she died. They then found that when they had been beating her in the head with that rifle butt, a skull fragment had gotten into her brain and then did its stuff.

Post-war

But because my mother was the worst case in that camp, we didn't leave for home right away. They found something in my lungs, even though open tuberculosis it wasn't. But my mother had had a heart attack there, weighed 29 kilos and was a so-called 'musulman' – those are these completely emaciated skeletons with bulging eyes and whiskers all over their faces. The Americans immediately started taking care of her, put her in some infirmary there and more or less put her back together again. So that's why we couldn't take the first transport home. For the time being they put me in a former Hitlerjugend 11 camp, on the shores of Lake Attersee [in the Austrian Alps], which was very pleasant, and I walked those five kilometers to the infirmary each day to see my mother. American soldiers would come to visit them there as well, and once some Englishman came by as well. My mother, when she was a bit better off – she really was already very badly off, a 36-year-old person – so after, when she was somewhat healthier, some soldier came by to see her, and my mother said, 'Hey, you're from England. I'm sure that my brother is in the army there.' He asked her what his name was, my mother told him his name, and he said, 'Yeah, Honza [a familiar version of Jan], I know him well, he's with the RAF.' [Editor's note: Royal Air Force (RAF) – part of

the British armed forces. During the years 1940 – 1945 around 3,500 Czech and Slovak pilots served in the RAF.]

By me we were returning home on 19th June, but those friends of mine, the two sisters, again claim some other date. But it's possible that they went on some earlier transport. Well, be it as it may, I think that we then arrived in Prague on 21st June. There we all went for a medical checkup. They immediately took my mother to the hospital in Podoli, back then it was still a general hospital, not a gynecological clinic. And they took me there with her. I don't know how long she was there, but once again they more or less put her into shape and still during summer vacation she returned to Litomysl, where she began searching for the furniture and things from our house.

Grandma's and Grandpa's housekeeper Marie took charge of me. She took me to her sister and niece in Dobrovice, near Mlada Boleslav. And there they truly tried to take complete care of me and fatten me up. I kept in touch with her up until her death, that was, I think, at the end of the 1960s, beginning of the 1970s. She died in Strancice, near Ricany. She had, when Grandpa and Grandma left for Terezin, or maybe a little before that, met some man of suitable years, some Tomic, who was from Strancice, at the approximate age of 50 she married him. She moved in with him, borrowed furnishings that were in our apartment, and then after the war gradually returned them to us.

Until 1951 my mother lived from her pension – and we lived very modestly, because it was a pension mainly from the time that my father worked as a laborer. It really wasn't a lot of money. In 1951 she had to find a job, but already back then due to her political background she couldn't do anything other than manual labor. She worked mainly in the Litomysl dairy, where she washed out large milk cans. She also worked at the post office, where she did some manual work, and also, I think, at a mill and then at Logarex, that was a factory that made various rulers. [Editor's note: The Logarex plant was founded in 1950 and manufactured computational and drafting instruments. In 1958 the plant became part of the company Koh-i-noor Hardtmuth Czech Republic. Today the plant manufactures school and office supplies.] The problem was, that as soon as she settled in somewhere, they immediately threw her out again, and she had to look for a new job.

So that political background…it was like this…during World War I, my great-grandmother, my mother's mother's mother, together with her son-in-law had a shoe factory, army boots I think, or something like that. And there was this one youth employed as an apprentice there, who didn't devote himself to work very much, and observed so-called Blue Mondays, meaning that on Monday he simply didn't come to work. Whether they then threw him out or not, I'm not sure, but apparently they probably did.

In short he held a grudge against our entire family. And I also think that he was a big anti-Semite, because when my mother returned, he met her on the square and greeted her in this fashion: 'Mrs. Freyova, that's horrible, so many Yids stayed there, and you and your hags had to return.' For in Terezin my mother apparently somehow got some cigarettes from someplace and bribed someone, so her grandmother and that grandmother's sister wouldn't have to go on the transport. My great-grandmother had six children, all of them stayed in Auschwitz, only she and her sister returned and then lived with us. That was a thorn in the eye for that 'comrade,' who later became the Communist Party chairman in Litomysl, and tried however he could to make life unpleasant for us.

Our family and my mother's sister's family lived together in one house, I think that it was a nice house. Because as soon as the Germans arrived and occupied Litomysl, we had to move in with my father's parents, and upstairs in that house the Germans set up an NSDAP [Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei] office and downstairs a 'Kindergarten,' or nursery school. After February 1948 12 this chairman of the Communist Party in Litomysl came upon an original idea. That we're going to have to move out and that he's going to put the Communist Party secretariat on the first floor, and a nursery school on the ground floor. Or an absolute analogy, right? Back then we tried as we might to defend ourselves. One of my friends worked at the district government office – back then Litomysl was still a district – and kept an eye open for us. As soon as they were notified that we'd have to move out, she told us about it even before we got the notification. My mother went to see a different friend, a lawyer, and she immediately wrote up an appeal for us. We appealed for so long, that we eventually appealed all the way up to Zapotocky 13. And with him we were finally successful, so we were able to stay there.

Well, but because there were two three-room apartments with a front hall, quite large rooms, they then wanted to move us out, based on the fact that it was too big for us. For in those days it was permitted to own only three rooms, but I don't remember their exact area. Back then it was established by some sort of decree. My mother resolved it by selling half of the house, the upper half, to a friend of hers. At that time they were looking for an apartment, so they bought it and immediately moved in. The lady is two years younger than our mother, and is still alive. At least I hope that I can say that, for sure she was still alive last week. So now this old lady lives upstairs there with her daughter, and in our apartment no one permanently. We go there only once in a while. None of my relatives are alive any more, but I have lots of classmates from elementary school and from high school.

That Communist Party chairman in Litomysl reacted very badly to the selling of that half of the house. Every little while my mother had to look for a job, we for example couldn't even go with a tour group to Dresden and I couldn't go with the [Communist] Youth Association to Romania. In this way he interfered with our lives until the year 1968, when he tried being progressive. Shortly thereafter he died. Then my mother had a better job: she started working as a gatekeeper at that dairy. But I've got the impression that soon after that she retired. As a pensioner she then worked as a tour guide at a historical chateau and Smetana's room, and finally at the Maticka Gallery – Josef Maticka was a painter in the naive style. It's very interesting naive art. He wasn't born in Litomysl, but married a woman from Litomysl, a Jewess by the way. His best paintings are from the time of the war, when he had some sort of premonition of something evil. Before that though, he was a pronounced Communist, which a lot of people were in those days. There's a gallery in Litomysl named after him, and that's where my mother worked.

My mother had a brother, Jan, who was two or three years older, and a sister, Marie, who was two years younger. They used to call her Micy [pronounced Mitzi], because she was born in Teplice [Teplice-M(arie)ice-Micy].

Her brother Jan was born in 1906. For a long time he was single and lived in Prostejov, where he had a children's wear shop. As far as his religious inclinations are concerned, they were very lukewarm. I almost doubt that he would have observed something, and quite certainly he didn't keep kosher. For a long time he lived with a local actress, prominent during those times, Tana Hodanova [1892–1982], but they weren't married. That name probably doesn't mean anything to

you, but in its day, it was a very prominent name. My uncle, being very foresighted, realized that staying here during the war wasn't a road to good fortune, so he wanted to emigrate with Tana Hodanova. But Tana refused, because her world was theater, the Ostrava stage. And so they broke up.

My uncle left for England alone, and started up some sort of textile repair business or something like that, and then had some sort of clothing store there. And he met a much younger girl from Opava, Erika Lichtwitzova, and married her. Her father had a liquor factory in Opava – it was named Lichtwitz Liker. After the war it became a can factory, Seliko. [Editor's note: The company Emanuel LICHTWITZ – Manufacturer of Liqueurs was founded in 1861 in Opava and in 1863 was recorded in the commercial registry under the name 'Em. LICHTWITZ.' After nationalization during the years 1948-1949 the plant was subsumed into national property. Gradually, from 1953 to 1958, its liquor manufacture declined and eventually halted. Its production was replaced by the manufacture of tin cans. The company went through several phases of organizational changes, currently as SELIKO a.s.]

Erika made it to England at the beginning of the war, or even before, that I don't know exactly. She was also Jewish, so she left for England, as Jews were doing back then. They both returned to Prague from England. On 20th September 1947 they had a son, who they named Tomas Jan Vaclav. But when he was half a year old, right after February 1948, they immediately returned with him back to England. And there he was left with only the name John. Erika is still alive, but then again she was much younger then my uncle, by 13 years. She lives in London and their son John lives right in the next building over.

My mother's sister Marie was born on 8th August 1911 and then lived in Litomysl up until deportation. She married Otto Sgall, who was 19 years older than she. They had a son, Milan, who was born on 5th May 1934. None of these three survived the war. They left on the Litomysl transport to Terezin and then went on the so-called September transport to Auschwitz, which means that they were all killed on 7th-8th September 1944 in Auschwitz.

As I've said, after the war I was also again able to go to school, to high school. That was the school year 1945/46. Back then I was accepted into 'kvarta' on a probationary basis – event though I already belonged into 'kvinta' [fifth year of school], where they, for understandable reasons, didn't take me – with the condition that by the end of the school year I had to pass exams in all the subjects in junior high school. Whereas I know that for example here in Prague one of my girlfriends only had to do exams in Czech and math, while I did them in natural sciences, chemistry, and I don't know what else. In the beginning it was very tough, but then I got used to the work. I used to study late into the night, the kvarta subjects, plus all of the other stuff.

After the war, only three of us children returned to Litomysl, what's more, of various ages, so the school offered us this possibility, but we had to prepare ourselves on our own. First this one student who had just graduated tutored me for the exams, and then one professor from a technical school, and one lady professor, perhaps also from a technical school. They would come to see me and stuffed my head with knowledge. Because before I had only gone up to the fourth grade of elementary school, and I had studied a bit privately and a tiny bit also in Terezin, secretly, but I knew virtually nothing. The last three quarters of a year that we had been in that Lenzing, I knew only painful, hard work. So I had a completely, but completely blank brain. I didn't remember

anything at all, whatever I learned in the evening, by morning I had forgotten it. But I made such an effort to pass those exams that I succeeded. At first I had all fours and fives [Es and Fs], but in the end I graduated near the top of the class. But I wouldn't say that I caught up with everything, even though for those exams it was enough.

I very much loved going to school. Summer holidays always took too long for me, I couldn't wait until I could go to school again. I liked studying, in elementary school, I think, I liked everything – perhaps less counting and more grammar. And I had a hard time coping with drawing. And in high school I loved all the humanities, while the natural sciences remained somewhat foreign to me. Though I must say that even so they interested me and I liked studying them.

After graduating I went on to study Library Science at the Faculty of Philosophy. I had wanted to take psychology, but halfway through my last year of high school I learned that I'd have to combine it with pure philosophy, and back then pure philosophy meant above all Marxism. Well, and so I rejected that notion and applied for Languages – not very cleverly though, because I applied for English-German. For in 1950 it was absolutely out of the question that I'd be accepted, when I didn't have a Party background. So I was very lucky that back then they wrote me: 'You have been accepted into Library Science.' And so I studied Library Science.

We had several people that had written entrance exams in completely different subject areas. For example, my current colleague, not only from the same year, but also the same profession, wrote her entrance exams in art history. And was also notified: 'You have been accepted into Library Science.' Because no one was interested in Library Science! Anita Frankova, for example, applied for History and was accepted into Archival Science. She was in the same year. Back then it wasn't possible to transfer to a different department, when they had already accepted you into the Faculty of Philosophy, even though I think someone perhaps managed it, but on the other hand they could accept you into a completely different department than the one you wrote entrance exams for.

Back then I said to myself that better Library Science than nothing. But then I began to like it, and I do to this day. Besides, already in elementary school I had liked reading, my favorite author was Foglar. [Foglar, Jaroslav (1907-1999): Czech writer of young people's literature.] I was reputedly a poor eater, and when my mother walked by a bookstore with me, I said, 'Mommy, I'm hungry.' And she apparently said, 'Come on, I'll take you over there across the way to the butcher shop and buy you something.' And I said, 'No, I'm hungry for reading.'

At home we of course also had a library. My father was a big collector of literature, and had a lot of technical literature. He liked fairy tales and things that were put out in those days by ELK, the European Literary Club. Which were these contemporary Czech and international classics. My mother also undoubtedly read similar literature. I don't know if they also had any religious literature at home; I only remember that Grandpa used to take his prayer book out of his night table. As far as magazines go, my father subscribed to the weekly Pestry Tyden, we even had it bound. [Editor's note: The introductory issue of the magazine Pestry Tyden (Colorful Week) was published in 1926. It was a weekly aimed at the intellectual upper class. Editors were Adolf Hoffmeister, Jaromir John, and up to the magazine's very end in 1945, Neubert.]

Litomysl also had a city library, but whether they used to go there, I don't know. I myself was only there once. That was after the war, already as a high school student, when I needed some compulsory literature. I saw that dark room, all the books wrapped in blue wrapping paper, the

librarian was a very interesting figure: very ugly, with jutting teeth, a black smock, sleeve protectors. Well, I was glad to leave there. And said to myself: 'To the library, never again.'

As far as foreign languages go, I'm capable of communicating in German. But I never studied German, because I was born in Pilsen and therefore grew up in a bilingual environment. At the age of eight, Uncle Sgall started teaching me English, which I then also had in high school, but as an option, and then also at university. So I can also get by in English. In high school we also had Latin. From 'kvarta' onwards I had Russian, in which I also tutored others, and then passed my exams in. But I've forgotten it, because I haven't used it for a long time. That I very much regret.

By the way, at the prison camp, in Lenzing, I was together with some Hungarian women, and so that I'd exercise my brain a bit, I learned Hungarian as well. I listened and asked them what this or that sentence or word meant. So back then I also understood that language fairly well, but now, except for a couple of words, I don't understand a thing. From 'kvinta' onwards I had French, in which, I think, I also passed my final exams, but because I haven't used it for so long, I know it passively, but unfortunately not actively. After the final state exams I applied to a school of languages to study modern Hebrew, or Ivrit, because I didn't know much of that from my childhood. That questionable Rabbi Samuel Freilich, who taught us Hebrew back in Litomysl in elementary school, didn't teach us much. More often it was our father or grandfather that taught us something.

Besides languages, I also devoted myself to sports quite a bit, but back then there weren't any sports clubs. Before the war I used to go to Sokol 19. But I never participated in any rally. I skied, skated, sledded, swam and so on. In Litomysl people used to go skating on a pond not far from Anita Frankova's house. So we used to go skating together. I never skied in the mountains; my parents didn't ski, so we never went. But in Litomysl there was this hill that they used to call Fejtak, or Fejt Hill. Back then it seemed awfully huge to me, but today I maybe wouldn't even notice it. What's more, it may not even be there any more, various changes have been made there. And it was on this hill that children in Litomysl used to go skiing. But my only interest was reading, and that's stayed with me to this day. Even today I'm usually never bored, buy I try to find a little bit of spare time for a bit of reading.

They made Library Science studies into a single major with no minor subject for us, so we graduated in two years, in 1952. During my studies I did my work experience at the National Museum, in the archival documents section, where I used to go work for free in the hopes that I'd get a job there. I found the work there quite fascinating. They then asked our faculty for me, because it was work placement time. But at our faculty they told them that the museum is a very reactionary environment and that I'm not politically somehow yet a completely lost cause, so that they have to put me someplace where I'll have a chance to become politically elevated. And they placed me at the Army Medical Library in Hradec Kralove. So I wrote them to introduce myself, and they wrote me back that three people had gotten the same placement, and that I was the least suitable as far as political background was concerned, so that they wouldn't accept me. Back then in the 1950s everything was possible, even that three people get placed into the same position.

Someone told me that he had heard that there was some library in Dejvice [a quarter of Prague]. So I left for Dejvice, and there I went from faculty to faculty – there was Agriculture and Chemistry there – and everywhere they told me that they had no free position. I also went to the UDA, which

was the Central Army Building, but there I had absolutely no luck due to my political background. And then in one of those places they told me that perhaps someplace in Podbaba, in some research institute, that there was some library.

So I went to Podbaba, found that there's a Water Management Research Institute there, and so I went to see the political officer, some Josef Fiala. He was an incredible primitive. Without having a single reference about me, when he found out that I had been in a concentration camp, he said to himself, 'Aha, she's got to be politically aware, we'll put her in the library. There they don't have a very good political background, so she'll educate them there.' So they put me there and we of course immediately understood each other, and right away I was one of them, and I and the woman who was the manager are friends to this day.

But I was there for only a short while, not quite a year, because we found out that the library was supposed to get a new manager. And my manager, because she knew that I could have political problems with him, said to me, 'Eva, you'd better get out of here as soon as you can.' And at that time, completely by coincidence, it was all this series of coincidences, this one engineer came by, who told me that they were starting up a new library at the Academy of Sciences, across the street – back then it was a laboratory for water management and then it was turned into the Hydrodynamics Institute – and if I don't know of someone. And my manager said, 'Don't hesitate for even an instant, and take it yourself.' So I took it myself. By the way, when I was leaving for my new workplace, I received the following political evaluation: 'Comrade Freyova, despite having been in a concentration camp, addresses her female comrades as Miss.' According to that political officer, as soon as someone had been in a concentration camp, they had to be a Communist. He was simply incredibly dumb.

So in 1953 I transferred to the Hydrodynamics Institute, they had a very good director there, and he had a splendid assistant. The assistant interviewed me, told me that everything was in order, but finally he paused, and to 'politically verify' me, he said, 'Please, Miss, there's one more thing, but I don't know how to say it. You see, we don't have a [Communist] Youth Association here. And if you're going to require it, we'll have to start one because of you.' And I replied, 'Please, anything but that.' I think that I was extremely lucky. So at the academy I started up a library, and I was there until 1988, until the last day of November 1988, when I retired. I was in charge of the entire library, so I performed acquisitions, processing, lending, statistics, purchasing plus inter-library loans.

After I retired I had various part-time jobs, for example at the National Library. I did bibliography at the Current Events Institute, and then in 1996 I founded my beloved library: the library at the Terezin Initiative Institute. That's why I've got such good access to the Terezin Memorial Book. At first Mr. Miroslav Karny, who took a leading role in the Terezin Initiative right after November [1989], was looking for someone to work at the museum in Terezin. I wasn't in the mood for commuting there daily, so I refused. But then, when his struggle for the creation of the Terezin Initiative Foundation 20 succeeded – today it's the Terezin Initiative Institute – they also wanted to have a library there, and he thought of me once again. I didn't have anything to do at the time, so I jumped into it with enthusiasm.

I really got into Library Science, I was captivated mainly by the system. Moreover, back then at the Hydrodynamic Institute the content also captivated me. My father was a technical person, I was

even familiar with some authors that my father had talked about, so it was something that near and dear to me. And at the Terezin Initiative, it's near and dear to me as a Jewess who herself was in Terezin.

As far as religion is concerned, I practice to this day, and this I see as being thanks to my grandfather and father, that they influenced me in such a way that it remained in me. As I've said, the teachings of that rabbi didn't give any of us much to go on. He was originally from [Subcarpathian] Ruthenia 21, his name was Samuel Freilich, and he spoke with this bad Czech. We had lessons about once a week. I used to go there with my only Jewish classmate, Anita Frankova. What's more, in the end it came out that Samuel Freilich was a big swindler. Before the transports, or perhaps even at the beginning of the war, he had asked some of the rich members of the community for money, telling them that he'd arrange emigration for them, and then disappeared. After the war he appeared at our place, right before lunch, and my mother asked him, 'So, what did you do with that money?' Well, he made all sorts of excuses, and then he claimed that he'd been interned at Ebensee [one of the most well-known sub-camps of Mauthausen]. Hearing this, my mother said, 'Well, that's interesting, but we returned home with the men from Ebensee.' And he immediately said his goodbyes. I never heard of him again.

Jewish history in Litomysl

Before the war a little over one hundred Jews lived in Litomysl – after the war fifteen of them returned – so it was unthinkable for ten men to gather at the synagogue on Friday evening [for a minyan – a minimum of ten men above the age of 13 necessary for a public prayer to be held]. So we attended the synagogue only on the high holidays, for Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Simchat Torah. Back then Litomysl had a population of 5,000, now it's got 10,000, and has always been very cultural. From at least the 19th century it was for one a student town and for another a town of writers, musicians and painters. Smetana [Bedrich (1824-1884): Czech composer, conductor, piano virtuoso and teacher], Jirasek [Alois (1851-1930): Czech novelist and playwright, writer of historical fairy tales] and Nemcova 22 lived here. I wrote about her in the Litomysl memorial journal. For it was there that she first published her first collection of writings with the local publisher Antonin August. She would always go and spend some time in Litomysl; she lived there in three different places.

There was never a Jewish quarter in Litomysl, only a synagogue and beside it the house of the shammash. There were no Jewish schools or mikves there. Currently the Jewish cemetery is in a state of absolute devastation. That's because it's not so old as to interest the Jewish Museum and the employees of the Jewish community, so it's all paid for from local sources. But I'm afraid that the possibilities are very limited. The devastation continues. Even though now a local teacher and her students have begun taking care of it. My great-grandmother on my father's side is definitely buried at the Litomysl cemetery. Maybe Uncle Karel too, her son. The rest of my relatives' ashes were scattered. As far as the synagogue goes, the Communists demolished it in the 1960s. I initiated and saw through an effort to have a memorial plaque installed in the place it used to stand. It has an inscription that the Nazis devastated it and the Communists demolished it. Their excuse at the time was that they wanted to build a housing development. Which they did, but it would not have stood in their way at all. Back then my mother tried to convince them to at least turn it into some cultural display. But there was a concerted effort to be rid of it all.

Jews in Litomysl were mainly merchants. They did business with various articles, but mainly with textiles, I think. There was a very prominent factory owner, Hugo Popper, a well-known footwear manufacturer. It was very high-quality footwear, mainly for export. By the way, if you know Helga Hoskova [Helga Hoskova-Weissova], the painter, who created a memorial plaque that's on the Park Hotel in Holesovice, from where the first Prague transports left, he was her uncle. She also made the memorial plaque for the Litomysl synagogue.

My religious identity

As a young girl I liked the high holidays, the way the entire family and the entire Litomysl community would go to synagogue. It was all so festive and we children horsed around frightfully. And we were admonished, even by hand. My grandfather, father and my father's brother sat on the left in the first row and I was allowed to come and sit with those three gentlemen. That I also liked a lot. In our synagogue it was normal for women to sit separately from the men, but I simply scampered down and sat myself down beside them. No one threw me out [Editor's note: in Orthodox synagogues, the women and men must sit separately]. Whether they would have thrown other children out, that I don't know, but I don't think anything would have happened to them either. What's more, it wasn't only once, if anything I sat there quite regularly. Besides that, I remember that when there was a maskir, or prayer for the dead – in that moment all who still have both parents and their siblings, basically their closest relatives, must leave the synagogue – I would leave the synagogue with both my parents, but I didn't know the reason why. But I knew that if both of my parents had to leave the synagogue as well, that for sure there was nothing indecent going on in there. Because whatever wasn't for children was indecent, at least that's how I understood it back then.

Otherwise on Friday evenings we always gathered at my grandfather's, at my father's father's, where the eve of the Sabbath was celebrated within our immediate family. Everything always took place in that room with the vaulted ceiling. But I don't remember my mother lighting Sabbath candles, for example. Grandpa said blessings before we ate, even though I'm not sure whether he said similar blessings before meals other than the Sabbath one. We didn't eat kosher, and likely no one in Litomysl did, as that possibility didn't even exist. My grandfather, when he was young, kept kosher, but then he came down with some stomach problems – what kind, I don't know – and the doctor recommended that he eat ham. Well, and chicken ham didn't exist back then. But he was wise, and I think that he handled it very well back then. We didn't even separate meat and dairy products. On the other hand, when I was at my grandfather's on Saturday, I wasn't even allowed to write. But when I was at home, then yes. My grandfather was stricter in this respect, and on Saturday he didn't even travel. [On Saturday, the Sabbath, Jewish religious laws forbid 39 fundamental work activities that are described in the Talmud, and other activities that are related to them. Among them are for example also writing and traveling.] But as the representative of the Most Steelworks, my father had to travel even on Saturday.

We also celebrated Passover, seder supper, at my grandfather's. Of course we read from the Haggadah and I was allowed to say the mah nishtanah. Because I wasn't very good in Hebrew, by father transcribed it onto a piece of paper in Latin script and put it into the Haggadah. I would read it, but felt very embarrassed, because I had the feeling that I was cheating if I didn't read it from the original. Today I'd know how to pray from the original, at least that what my grandpa and father taught me. They both devoted themselves to me a great deal, mainly my grandfather, he

really quite vehemently, because my father had little time, being always on the road.

Our family never observed Christian holidays, we for example never had a Christmas tree. It never really bothered me, and I didn't even try to somehow conceal it from my classmates. I was taught to proudly acknowledge it. But I think that it didn't interest my classmates at all anyways, whether I got presents at Christmas or for Chanukkah, and neither were any of them interested in how and why Chanukkah is celebrated, for example.

When I was little, all those prohibitions and commandments bothered me a lot. My parents always left me with my grandpa and grandma, with my father's parents, and Grandma was always afraid for me and wouldn't let me out to play with other children. On the other hand, even though Grandpa forbade me to write and draw, he did tell me various Bible stories, which captivated me. Later I read the whole Bible, both the Old and New Testament. And occasionally, when I come upon something, I write about religion in the Jewish Almanac. But not so much anymore now; now I devote myself more, how would I say it, to the formal aspects of the community's life. Because, as you surely know, there's a lot of quarreling going on there. I'm a supporter of the anti-Sidon side, and I identify myself as such. [Editor's note: Karol Efraim Sidon, the Chief Rabbi of the Czech Republic and Prague, is an advocate of conservative Judaism.] It's got nothing to do with religion, though, it's more about a certain relationship with the community. I'm convinced that the other side – we always say on our side and on the other side – that by me the other side, though it very demonstratively performs religious rites, is mainly concerned with financial and other gains. Well, basically financial.

Today I myself don't observe prohibitions connected with Saturday, neither do I light candles. In a mixed marriage that's not possible and our lifestyle in general doesn't allow it. I only go to the community during certain holidays, and during the Long Day [Yom Kippur] I fast. But I began to take Judaism as more of a philosophy of life and the things that weren't possible to observe, basically the formalities, I dispensed with. That's also why the current Orthodox tendency of the Prague community is foreign to me. According to me, the things that they are promoting are only these formalities, things through which a person removes himself from normal society. That he puts himself 'on show.' That I don't like, that sort of, let's say, demonstration.

As an adult I was at the synagogue on Friday evening, and it seemed to me to be foreign, impersonal, so I said to myself that I have no need of it. But because as a child I was used to going to the synagogue on the high holidays, somehow I attended the whole time, even during Communist times. Because I'm a librarian, I also had official errands to run, so I combined it with some official errand. And no one knew anything. Probably I was lucky. And just as lucky was my husband, Milan Dusek, who played the organ at St. Margaret's, also every Sunday and every holiday. Their political officer lived across the street from the entrance to St. Margaret's, and she used to say, 'I know everything about everyone.' But about my husband she knew nothing. I never felt any repression due to my faith during Communist times. Only once, during some interrogation, or perhaps a political background interview, I don't know any more, they asked how it is with me and religion, to which I replied that I don't have it all figured out yet.

I never came across any anti-Semitism in my life, neither in school, nor at work. My mother did, with that chairman of the National Committee, but not me personally. I never had the need to hide my Jewish origin, but neither did I feel the need to demonstrate it. At work they of course knew it

about me. By the way, we had a group of four of us women there, and all of us were religiously inclined, each to a different kind. And we discussed it, in absolute agreement. One was a Protestant, another Czechoslovak [Czechoslovak Hussite Church] and one was a Catholic. What connected us was the common opinion regarding whether one should be a believer or atheist, you know, during totalitarian times. I think that regarding faith, all four of us were tolerant, and still are to this day.

I grew out of Judaism, or more I grew up in it. That doubt whether I should accept it never came upon me, I don't think that I ever thought about anything like that. I simply took it as a given. And I never asked anyone whether I should believe or not, not even during times of Communism, which promoted atheism. I believed, but never advertised the fact. People even asked me, how it's possible that I didn't stop believing after the Holocaust. But I know that that's how it had to be, so I go on believing. It's hard to put into words what in Judaism speaks to me the most. I like that my opinion and my feelings are shared by another, here larger, here smaller group of people. And above all they're emotional bonds – to tradition and Jewish ideals.

Married life

My husband is named Milan Dusek. He's not a Jew, but a Catholic. He was born on 26th May 1931. He grew up in Usti nad Orlici, but his mother left for Vysoke Myto to give birth to him – there was no maternity ward in Usti. He had, but actually didn't have siblings. Because his father Emil was married for a second time. He first married in 1894. He had six children with his first wife. But she was chronically ill in some way; no one knows exactly what was wrong with her. They thought that maybe it was multiple sclerosis. Then when he became a widower, it became apparent that none of those basically already adult children wanted to take care of him. And so he found a housekeeper. And he decided to take her as his wife.

She was named Justina Zimprichova. There was an age difference of 28 years between them. She was actually a German, who came from around Usti nad Orlici, from the Sudetenland. But she identified herself as being of Czech nationality. So my father had six half-siblings from his father's first marriage, and none from the second. I don't know anything about them, they didn't associate and I don't think that any of them are still alive. His oldest brother, if I'm not mistaken, was about three-quarters of a year older than my husband's mother. And they apparently were very jealous of her. They just didn't want to have anything to do with them [their father and his second wife].

My husband graduated from the Prague Conservatory, but for political reasons he only got in on the third attempt. So before that he absolved several working-class professions, he worked in some shop that manufactured shingles and so on, various things.

After graduation he taught music in Vysoke Myto for some time, but in the end he returned to the conservatory. There he primarily taught piano, improvisation and theory. But his original profession is that of an organist, he himself played in the Brevnov Monastery during totalitarian times. He also taught music at DAMU [Faculty of Drama of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague]. There, by the way, he taught mainly the year in which were Dejdar [Martin (b. 1965)], Hrzanova [Barbora (b. 1964)], Jancarik, he's in Brno, and Hanus [Miroslav (b. 1963)], he plays at the Theater in Dlouha. I think that in the second year they rehearsed this one-act play from F.F. Samberk [Frantisek Ferdinand (1838-1904)], 'Nuthouse On The First Floor.' They modernized it and played it at Disk [DAMU student theater]. Then when they graduated, the guys went into the army. But when they

returned, they decided that they'd rehearse it again. But they didn't have any materials any more, and so my husband had to put everything together from recordings. And so he put it together, prepared it and accompanied them. They played it – and virtually still do – in various theaters. He then worked on other plays with them as well. Even now, when Dejdar and Hrzanova have some time, for both of them are very busy, they take the play to Brno to the Radost Theater. But the play hasn't been put on for a long time now.

So, both of us studied in Prague, my husband lived in a dorm during his studies, from 1951 to 1956. I lived in a private apartment. But we didn't meet until later, on 14th December 1959. In a train. There used to be a shuttle train from Litomysl to Chocen – and it still runs to this day. At one time there was an effort to route an express train through Litomysl, but the town council was against it. So it didn't happen. Luckily. At that time my husband was taking the train from Usti to Prague, and I from Litomysl. And in Chocen I sat down in the compartment where my husband was sitting.

Later we agreed that usually both of us simply sat down in the compartment, read something and didn't talk to anyone. But back then I asked him whether there was a free spot, he said yes, and right away we began to talk. I had a leather coat on, which I had bought in Bulgaria, and because of which I had had political profile issues. And because of it my husband thought that I worked for the StB [Statni Tajna Bezpecnost] 23 and it irritated him greatly. But they way it had been with that coat, was that I had traded it for some things, but the political officers thought that I had bought it and asked me how I had come by so much money. I had a high school classmate who had married a man in Bulgaria, and she confirmed that she had given me the coat. So we began to discuss our jobs. I told him what I did, and then I asked him what he did. He answered that he taught. My question as to whether in elementary school provoked him. He told me that no, that he teaches at a conservatory.

Well, and then we started discussing music. I myself had taken piano lessons for a long time, but back then they told me that despite being talented, I'll never get very far in it. I used to go see this one teacher, her name was Emilie Votroubkova. She would stand above me, whack me across the fingers and address me in the third person. She would say, 'I'm convinced, that when I die, she won't come to my funeral.' After the war I even had a recital. But it ended up very infamously. After the war I also took accordion lessons, which I had insisted on, and when there was a public performance, my teacher told me, 'Take my advice, and take your notes with you.' But I answered, 'No way, I've got it perfectly memorized.' I got through the toughest part, and that was the end. But I was never one for public performances. I didn't like showing off in public. As opposed to Anita Frankova, who would sing whenever anyone asked her to. I also sang in a choir, the school choir.

I told my future husband that I like Janacek [Leos Janacek (1854-1928): Czech composer, teacher, prominent folklorist and leading exponent of modern music], he said that he liked Mozart. So we found that we absolutely could not agree. We arrived in Prague, walked out to the streetcar stop, and standing there and waiting for the streetcar was a former pupil of my husband's – my husband at one time taught music at a technical school in Vysoke Myto – who was also a colleague of mine. Because he was a technician and worked at our Institute. Both of us walked up to him and each of us wanted to introduce him to the other. And he says, 'I know both of you.' In the meantime the streetcar was approaching, I and that Mr. Peterka got on the streetcar, and my husband says, 'Mr. Peterka, what's your phone number?' And he says, 'Such and such, but Miss Freyova's number is so and so.' In the streetcar I then questioned him, 'Mr. Peterka, please, who's that impossible

man?' And he says to me, 'Well, excuse me, he's actually an excellent person.' My husband called me the next day and I began to investigate what it was that was so excellent about him. And I'm still investigating to this day.

We were married on 28th January 1961. I had applied at an apartment co-op, and at that time we began to have a realistic hope of getting an apartment. That quickened our decision. Our first child, our daughter Hana, was born on 15th January 1962. Our son Petr is younger: he was born on 25th November 1967.

Our daughter is married for the second time, because her husband, Jan Sevcik, was killed in a car accident a year after their wedding. She married him in 1985. In 1987 she met her second husband, Petr Janis, and married him in 1988. She has one daughter from her second marriage, Tereza who is 16 now. Hana graduated from DAMU, Department of Theater and Cultural Organization and Administration. In other words, production. Now she works as a public relations officer for various companies.

Our son Petr is also married, he was married ten years ago, so in 1995. He married Lucie Blahetova. They have two daughters together, Katerina and Barbora. Katerina was born on 1st October 2000. The other is going to be two on 9th October, so she was born in 2003. Petr has a technical diploma in Mechanical Engineering, which he did after his army service. Originally he had been a licensed auto mechanic. Now he's studying at a university in Brno, Department of Special Education. He does distance studies, as part of his profession – he's a criminologist – and it was a condition of his staying in his job.

As far my children are concerned, I'd say that my daughter has very Jewish sentiments. She says that the fact that she's a half-breed enlarges her capability for tolerance. She considers herself to be Jewish, doesn't practice, is in fact an atheist, but sees it as the fact that she has Jewish blood. My son Petr doesn't think about it as much, he only said that he'd like to join the Jewish community, which he managed, but I didn't ask him why, because he's very introverted. I have no idea what made him do it. He's not circumcised and neither does he practice in any way.

But both children were brought up to believe, and that in both directions, because my husband is also religiously inclined. Our children saw it, we never hid it from them, and they knew that it had to be combined somehow. They knew the differences and saw that we tolerate each other, so they tolerated it without any problems whatsoever. We celebrated Jewish and Christian holidays equally. The whole family still goes to the community with me: during Chanukkah or at Purim and Passover. They themselves don't observe holidays. Now during the high holidays I go either alone or with my husband, because our children simply don't have the time for it. But when they were small, they also went. When I was married I also began to celebrate Christmas. We used to celebrate it here at home, we'd put up a tree and so on. Today we celebrate it at our daughters' place. I take it as a social occasion, and an opportunity for the family to get together.

As far as spare time goes, at one time I used to enthusiastically attend plays and concerts. Today very little, because I'm somewhat handicapped. I had a broken leg and also had my first lumbar vertebrae broken twice – once last year and again this year. So now I'm a little more tired. I used to go with my girlfriends, because my husband doesn't go out anywhere. He's got his music library at home and doesn't want to be disturbed while listening to it. He says that he can't stand the various shuffling of feet and coughing at public performances. The last few years I also rarely go to the

movies, but when we where younger we used to go. There used to be a movie theater in Litomysl, and at one time even two, I think. I was there even before the war, at that time they were showing 'Snow White.'

I also used to go to student balls a lot, they were on an excellent level. Today dances are formally the same as back then, but not content-wise. Here in Prague, last year, I attended dances with my granddaughter, it was a group of people – I don't want to call it a society – who didn't know each other at all, while we, there in that small town, all knew each other. They were only student dances, and so we were a uniform society and one could say a good society. As far as I can remember, we used to go to dances once a week, but how long they lasted, I don't know any more. In Prague I then used to go to balls with a group of friends, because my husband doesn't dance. He did participate in dances, and several times in fact, but only as a piano player. He's a complete anti-talent when it comes to dancing.

So I spend my free time with my girlfriends. I've retained some friendships from long-ago times as well. For example, last week I visited one girlfriend who I know from when we were still of preschool age – that's a long-term friendship. I'm also still friends with that classmate of mine that I used to play with during the war, and with girls from high school. These days we have reunions every year. Originally they were every five years, then every three years, and now every year. Once in a while we write each other. We also used to go on trips together, but not any more. We of course used to do it as scouts when we were single. We used to go camping, on trips into the countryside and so on. Not only around Litomysl. In 1949 we were in the Svatojanska Valley in Slovakia. There are girls and boy scouts. The way it worked was that the boys built the camp and were there for the first 14 days. We would then take their place and then take the camp apart. I liked going there, there were girls that I felt close to, the spirit of scouting was close to my heart, basically it was a good gang. I began going there in 1947 during summer vacation. In 1949, after summer vacation, the Scouts were unfortunately disbanded [see Czech Scout Movement] 24.

I never differentiated whether my friends were Jews or not. It wasn't even possible; there were only nineteen of us children there, and of my age only, Anita Frankova. I'm good friends with her to this day. Even though we don't have time to meet up, we only promise each other.

My relationship with the Communist regime was unambiguous and supported by many facts. But I had never been interrogated due to my relatives in the West. They probably checked our correspondence, but of course we wrote very carefully. We also tried to listen to Radio Free Europe 25 and so on, but it was very difficult, because it was jammed a lot in Prague. Outside of Prague it was easier. And once in a while I also got to a samizdat [see Samizdat literature in Czechoslovakia] 26.

Luckily at work we were this good group, there weren't any Communists there. Though in 1968 [see Prague Spring] 27 the director of our institute emigrated, I had and still have – I hope that he's still alive – a very good friendly relationship with him. I even went to visit him in England in 1992. However, I also was friendly with the new director.

But in 1974 they put a radical end to all that: a new 'comrade' director came, and hard times were upon us. For example, he suspected, or perhaps someone informed him, that the library is actually gathering all information, that therefore we know everything. He asked me into his office and wanted me to inform on people. I refused. And from that time on I had the lowest salary and the

lowest bonuses. But he didn't have any way of getting rid of me, because I was protected by '255,' that is, by statute 255/46 regarding privileges of people that had returned from concentration camps. So he couldn't fire me.

In 1981, however, when Solidarity 28 came along, he tried to go at it using that route. One day in the year 1981 when I came home from work, I found an official notice in my mailbox that said: 'Come the next day at such and such a time to Bartolomejska Street No. 4. According to statute XY.' I said to myself, 'Omigod, what could have I done?' And I went to the local VB [Public Security, today the Police] and asked them what statute that was. And they told me that it concerned the theft of socialist state property. I said to myself, 'But I couldn't have stolen anything. I don't know of anything.' The next day I went to Bartolomejska Street, went to the reception and said, 'Excuse me, there's probably a mistake here, because it's supposed to be such and such statute, and I'm not aware of having stolen anything.' The concierge answered me, 'Well, maybe you stole something while you were drunk.' To which I said, 'Excuse me, but the last time I was drunk I was three years old.' And he jumped up and said, 'What? Do you know what could have come of it!' I said that luckily nothing came of it.

So he led me upstairs and there was someone sitting there who was asking me questions from one angle, then another. After some time my patience wore thin and I said, 'Excuse me, tell me what you actually want from me. You're wasting your time here, while you should be working, I'm wasting my time, while I'm supposed to be working.' Well, then he finally asked whether I supposedly don't have some connection to Solidarity. Whether I'm not receiving any literature from them. And whether I'm in contact with people abroad. To this I said, 'Yes, I am. Because I have a lot of relatives there, who emigrated there before Hitler.' The ones who emigrated after 1968, those I somehow forgot about.

Well, so we talked like this for a while, he asked whether by any chance I don't write those relatives that there are things here that I don't like. I took exception and asked what it was that I could possibly write them. Well, it went on like this for a while longer, and then he said, 'All right, you can go home.' And I said, 'I'm not going home until you give me an official confirmation that I've been here, because I need it for work.' He answered: "I'm sorry, but I can't leave you here by yourself.' And I said, 'Well, I'm sorry too, but I'm simply not leaving here without that confirmation.' And so he said to me, 'Stay where you're sitting, and don't move even a bit,' pressed some button under the table and in a while came back, brought me the confirmation, and I went home.

So, even this didn't work out for the director. And when I realized that despite my relatively minimal income, it would be more advantageous for me to retire on 1st December 1988, I left on my own. Even though, due to that 'Article 255,' I had already been of retirement age since 1982. And then the year 1989 [see Velvet Revolution] 29 arrived. At that time, though, I was mainly occupied with babysitting my oldest granddaughter, Tereza. I used to take her up to Petrin [Hill] in her baby carriage, and watched the masses of people walking about and demonstrating. But I also went; I was on Wenceslaus Square and also on Letna.

Otherwise I was allowed to travel even during Communist times. My mother and I had been to England to visit relatives. And then in 1992. Nowadays we don't travel much, we used to spend summer vacations partly alone and partly with our children and their families. Once in a while we babysat Tereza. We took care of those little girls [the interviewee's granddaughters] only once in a

while. This year we were in Litomysl with them for the first time.

Before 1950 my mother had a great desire to emigrate. I insisted that I wanted to graduate from high school in Litomysl. Then in 1968 I had a desire to emigrate, and I was already married and my husband didn't want to leave. I wanted to leave, maybe for Canada, where I had lots of relatives. I have no relatives in Israel, though I do have a few friends there, emigrants. When I arrived in Israel I was very glad to see them and I felt good with them. I'm convinced that Israel should have been created and that the people that live there are happy and feel at home there. But I don't think that I would feel at home there. I'm used to a Christian environment.

I've been to Israel four times. The first time was back then with President Havel 30 in April of 1990. That was his first trip to Israel, when he took some of us with him, I think that there were 90 of us, but I wouldn't bet my life on it. At that time there was some sort of program, a ballet or concert and as part of it Havel and Knazko 31 made speeches. Knazko unpleasantly surprised me, because at that time Havel spoke for Czechoslovakia, but Knazko for Slovakia. Even back then you could see the effort to separate. They then led us to the University of Jerusalem, where there was some exhibition about the Holocaust. And we were at Yad Vashem 32. In May of that same year I was there to attend a congress of the International Council of Jewish Women. The third time, I was there with a tour group through a travel agency, that was for about a week, a typical travel agency tour, a large group, by bus. That time I went there with Anita Frankova. The fourth time I was there, it was once again for a congress of the International Council of Jewish Women.

During that official trip I lived with relatives of a girlfriend of mine, and they took us to visit various historical sites and during the two congresses they also always took us on some trip: each time to Yad Vashem, and then one time to see the bedouin in the Negev Desert.

My first impression upon visiting Israel was that I'm walking along in the Bible. And that impression always followed me. I was especially captivated by Jerusalem's Old Town, Jaffa Gate, basically the entire city. I was of course also at the Wailing Wall. The first time a larger group of us went there, and then I was there again with some friends. But I liked the other cities that I visited during that bus tour as well. For example Jaffa or Tel Aviv and Bethlehem. We were also at Masada, on the Mount of Olives, or in Nazareth, there I liked it a lot. For me it was interesting to visit both Jewish and Christian historical sites.

My experiences down below, by the Dead Sea and in Eilat, were more negative. I had been very curious about the Dead Sea, but I had some scrapes, something not normally noticeable, but I couldn't go into that salty water. That made me very sad. So I'd never want to go to the Dead Sea again. And I didn't like Eilat either, because it's a big city and it's really just a shopping mall by the sea. I did like the seaquarium there. And otherwise I was absolutely not impressed by a diamond cutting shop, because that was also very commercially oriented. And I didn't like the tour guide, because she tried to make as much out of it for herself, and didn't take care of us. I had a certain misunderstanding with her, we didn't get along at all. No, I didn't do anything rotten to her, it was more that I pointed out her inaccuracies. And that was already at the airport in Prague. And she put up a fight.

I can't say that I was looking forward to anything in particular before my first visit to Israel. I was curious about everything. And everything surprised me.

Glossary

1 Terezin/Theresienstadt

A ghetto in the Czech Republic, run by the SS. Jews were transferred from there to various extermination camps. It was used to camouflage the extermination of European Jews by the Nazis, who presented Theresienstadt as a 'model Jewish settlement'. Czech gendarmes served as ghetto guards, and with their help the Jews were able to maintain contact with the outside world. Although education was prohibited, regular classes were held, clandestinely. Thanks to the large number of artists, writers, and scholars in the ghetto, there was an intensive program of cultural activities. At the end of 1943, when word spread of what was happening in the Nazi camps, the Germans decided to allow an International Red Cross investigation committee to visit Theresienstadt. In preparation, more prisoners were deported to Auschwitz, in order to reduce congestion in the ghetto. Dummy stores, a cafe, a bank, kindergartens, a school, and flower gardens were put up to deceive the committee.

2 Terezin Initiative

In the year 1991 the former prisoners of various concentration camps met and decided to found the Terezin Initiative (TI), whose goal is to commemorate the fate of Protectorate (Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia) Jews, to commemorate the dead and document the history of the Terezin ghetto. Within the framework of this mission TI performs informative, documentary, educational and editorial activities. It also financially supports field trips to the Terezin Ghetto Museum for Czech schools.

3 Joseph II (1741-1790)

Holy Roman Emperor, king of Bohemia and Hungary (1780-1790), a representative figure of enlightened absolutism. He carried out a complex program of political, economic, social and cultural reforms. His main aims were religious toleration, unrestricted trade and education, and a reduction in the power of the Church. These views were reflected in his policy toward Jews. His ‚Judenreformen' (Jewish reforms) and the ‚Toleranzpatent' (Edict of Tolerance) granted Jews several important rights that they had been deprived of before: they were allowed to settle in royal free cities, rent land, engage in crafts and commerce, become members of guilds, etc. Joseph had several laws which didn't help Jewish interests: he prohibited the use of Hebrew and Yiddish in business and public records, he abolished rabbinical jurisdiction and introduced liability for military service. A special decree ordered all the Jews to select a German family name for themselves. Joseph's reign introduced some civic improvement into the life of the Jews in the Empire, and also supported cultural and linguistic assimilation. As a result, controversy arose between liberal-minded and orthodox Jews, which is considered the root cause of the schism between the Orthodox and the Neolog Jewry.

4 Von Schuschnigg, Kurt (1897-1977)

Austrian politician. During the years 1934-1938 Austrian Chancellor. Continued in Dollfuss politics. On 11th March 1938 Schuschnigg received an ultimatum from Hitler, to also accept Nazi politicians

into his party, which he refused. The same day, Hitler ordered the Wehrmacht to enter Austrian territory. After the annexation of Austria, on 13th March 1938, Schuschnigg was jailed. After the war he lived in the USA from 1945-67. (Sources: Illustrated Encyclopedic Dictionary, Academia, Praha 1982, pg. 261; www.dws.ozone.pl)

5 Tobruk

harbor town in Libya on the Mediterranean Sea. During WWII heavy battles for Tobruk took place, in which together with the British Army Czech soldiers also participated. On 22nd January 1941 it was occupied by the British Army. On 21st June 1942, after a siege of several months, if was occupied by the Wehrmacht led by Field Marshal Rommel. On 12th-13th November it was again conquered by the British Army. (Source: Illustrated Encyclopedic Dictionary, Academia, Praha 1982, pg. 261)

6 Orthodox communities

The traditionalist Jewish communities founded their own Orthodox organizations after the Universal Meeting in 1868-1869. They organized their life according to Judaist principles and opposed to assimilative aspirations. The community leaders were the rabbis. The statute of their communities was sanctioned by the king in 1871. In the western part of Hungary the communities of the German and Slovakian immigrants' descendants were formed according to the Western Orthodox principles. At the same time in the East, among the Jews of Galician origins the 'eastern' type of Orthodoxy was formed; there the Hassidism prevailed. In time the Western Orthodoxy also spread over to the eastern part of Hungary. 294 Orthodox mother-communities and 1,001 subsidiary communities were registered all over Hungary, mainly in Transylvania and in the north-eastern part of the country, in 1896. In 1930 30.4 % of Hungarian Jews belonged to 136 mother-communities and 300 subsidiary communities. This number increased to 535 Orthodox communities in 1944, including 242,059 believers (46 %).

7 Kashrut in eating habits

kashrut means ritual behavior. A term indicating the religious validity of some object or article according to Jewish law, mainly in the case of foodstuffs. Biblical law dictates which living creatures are allowed to be eaten. The use of blood is strictly forbidden. The method of slaughter is prescribed, the so-called shechitah. The main rule of kashrut is the prohibition of eating dairy and meat products at the same time, even when they weren't cooked together. The time interval between eating foods differs. On the territory of Slovakia six hours must pass between the eating of a meat and dairy product. In the opposite case, when a dairy product is eaten first and then a meat product, the time interval is different. In some Jewish communities it is sufficient to wash out one's mouth with water. The longest time interval was three hours – for example in Orthodox communities in Southwestern Slovakia.

8 Forced displacement of Germans

one of the terms used to designate the mass deportations of German occupants from Czechoslovakia which took place after WWII, during the years 1945-1946. Despite the fact that anti-German sentiments were common in Czech society after WWII, the origin of the idea of

resolving post-war relations between Czechs and Sudeten Germans with mass deportations are attributed to President Edvard Benes, who gradually gained the Allies' support for his intent. The deportation of Germans from Czechoslovakia, together with deportations related to a change in Poland's borders (about 5 million Germans) was the largest post-war transfer of population in Europe. During the years 1945-46 more than 3 million people had to leave Czechoslovakia; 250,000 Germans with limited citizenship rights were allowed to stay. (Source:http://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vys%C3%ADdlen%C3%AD_N%C4%9Bmc%C5%AF_z_%C4%8Ceskoslov

9 Skoda Company

Car factory, the foundations of which were laid in 1895 by the mechanics V. Laurin and V. Klement with the production of Slavia bicycles. Just before the end of the 19th century they began manufacturing motor cycles and, in 1905, they started manufacturing automobiles. The name Skoda was introduced in 1925. Having survived economic difficulties, the company made a name for itself on the international market even within the constraints of the Socialist economy. In 1991 Skoda became a joint stock company in association with Volkswagen.

10 Sudetenland

Highly industrialized north-west frontier region that was transferred from the Austro-Hungarian Empire to the new state of Czechoslovakia in 1919. Together with the land a German-speaking minority of 3 million people was annexed, which became a constant source of tension both between the states of Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia, and within Czechoslovakia. In 1935 a Nazi-type party, the Sudeten German Party financed by the German government, was set up. Following the Munich Agreement in 1938 German troops occupied the Sudetenland. In 1945 Czechoslovakia regained the territory and pogroms started against the German and Hungarian minority. The Potsdam Agreement authorized Czechoslovakia to expel the entire German and Hungarian minority from the country.

11 Hitlerjugend

The youth organization of the German Nazi Party (NSDAP). In 1936 all other German youth organizations were abolished and the Hitlerjugend was the only legal state youth organization. From 1939 all young Germans between 10 and 18 were obliged to join the Hitlerjugend, which organized after-school activities and political education. Boys over 14 were also given pre-military training and girls over 14 were trained for motherhood and domestic duties. After reaching the age of 18, young people either joined the army or went to work.

12 February 1948

Communist take-over in Czechoslovakia. The 'people's democracy' became one of the Soviet satellites in Eastern Europe. The state apparatus was centralized under the leadership of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (KSC). In the economy private ownership was banned and submitted to central planning. The state took control of the educational system, too. Political opposition and dissident elements were persecuted.

13 Zapotocky, Antonin (1884-1957)

From 1921 a member of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (KSC), from1940-1945 imprisoned in the Sachsenhausen-Oranienburg concentration camp. 1945-1950 president of the Central Union Committee (URO), 1950-1953 member of the National Assembly (NS), 1948-1953 Prime Minister. From 21st March 1953 president of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic.

14 Anti-Jewish laws in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia

In March 1939, there lived in the Protectorate 92,199 inhabitants classified according to the so-called Nuremberg Laws as Jews. On 21st June 1939, Konstantin von Neurath, the Reichs protector, passed the so-called Edict Regarding Jewish Property, which put restrictions on Jewish property. On 24th April 1940, a government edict was passed which eliminated Jews from economic activity. Similarly like previous legal changes it was based on the Nuremburg Law definitions and limited the legal standing of Jews. According to the law, Jews couldn't perform any functions (honorary or paid) in the courts or public service and couldn't participate at all in politics, be members of Jewish organizations and other organizations of social, cultural and economic nature. They were completely barred from performing any independent occupation, couldn't work as lawyers, doctors, veterinarians, notaries, defence attorneys and so on. Jewish residents could participate in public life only in the realm of religious Jewish organizations. Jews were forbidden to enter certain streets, squares, parks and other public places. From September 1939 they were forbidden from being outside their home after 8pm. Beginning in November 1939 they couldn't leave, even temporarily, their place of residence without special permission. Residents of Jewish extraction were barred from visiting theatres and cinemas, restaurants and cafés, swimming pools, libraries and other entertainment and sports centres. On public transport they were limited to standing room in the last car, in trains they weren't allowed to use dining or sleeping cars and could ride only in the lowest class, again only in the last car. They weren't allowed entry into waiting rooms and other station facilities. The Nazis limited shopping hours for Jews to twice two hours and later only two hours per day. They confiscated radio equipment and limited their choice of groceries. Jews weren't allowed to keep animals at home. Jewish children were prevented from visiting German, and, from August 1940, also Czech public and private schools. In March 1941 even so-called re-education courses organized by the Jewish Religious Community were forbidden, and from June 1942 also education in Jewish schools. To eliminate Jews from society it was important that they be easily identifiable. Beginning in March 1940, citizenship cards of Jews were marked by the letter 'J' (for Jude – Jew). From 1st September 1941 Jews older than six could only go out in public if they wore a yellow six-pointed star with 'Jude' written on it on their clothing.

15 September 1938 mobilization

The ascent of the Nazis to power in Germany in 1933 represented a fundamental turning point in the foreign political situation of Czechoslovakia. The growing tension of the second half of the 1930s finally culminated in 1938, when the growing aggressiveness of neighboring Germany led first to the adoption of emergency measures from May 20th to June 22nd, and finally to the proclamation of a general mobilization on 23rd September 1938. At the end of September 1938, however, Czechoslovakia's defense system, for years laboriously built up, collapsed. Czechoslovakia's main ally, France, forced them to submit to Germany, and made no secret of the

fact that they did not intend to provide military assistance. The support of the Soviet Union, otherwise in itself quite problematic, was contingent upon the support of France. Other countries, i.e. Hungary and Poland, were only waiting for the opportunity to gain something for themselves. (Source: http://www.military.cz/opevneni/mobilizace.html)

16 Yellow star – Jewish star in Protectorate

On 1st September 1941 an edict was issued according to which all Jews having reached the age of six were forbidden to appear in public without the Jewish star. The Jewish star is represented by a hand-sized, six-pointed yellow star outlined in black, with the word Jude in black letters. It had to be worn in a visible place on the left side of the article of clothing. This edict came into force on 19th September 1941. It was another step aimed at eliminating Jews from society. The idea’s author was Reinhard Heydrich himself.

17 Heydrichiade

Period of harsh reprisals against the Czech resistance movement and against the Czech nation under the German occupation (1939–45). It started in September 1941 with the appointment of R. Heydrich as Reichsprotektor of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, who declared martial law and executed the representatives of the local resistance. The Heydrichiade came to its peak after Heydrich’s assassination in May 1942. After his death, martial law was introduced until early July 1942, in the framework of which Czech patriots were executed and deported to concentration camps, and the towns of Lidice and Lezaky were annihilated. Sometimes the term Heydrichiade is used to refer to the period of martial law after Heydrich’s assassination.

18 Gulag

The Soviet system of forced labor camps in the remote regions of Siberia and the Far North, which was first established in 1919. However, it was not until the early 1930s that there was a significant number of inmates in the camps. By 1934 the Gulag, or the Main Directorate for Corrective Labor Camps, then under the Cheka's successor organization the NKVD, had several million inmates. The prisoners included murderers, thieves, and other common criminals, along with political and religious dissenters. The Gulag camps made significant contributions to the Soviet economy during the rule of Stalin. Conditions in the camps were extremely harsh. After Stalin died in 1953, the population of the camps was reduced significantly, and conditions for the inmates improved somewhat.

19 Sokol

One of the best-known Czech sports organizations. It was founded in 1862 as the first physical educational organization in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Besides regular training of all age groups, units organized sports competitions, colorful gymnastics rallies, cultural events including drama, literature and music, excursions and youth camps. Although its main goal had always been the promotion of national health and sports, Sokol also played a key role in the national resistance to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Nazi occupation and the communist regime. Sokol flourished between the two World Wars; its membership grew to over a million. Important statesmen, including the first two presidents of interwar Czechoslovakia, Tomas Masaryk and Edvard Benes,

were members of Sokol. Sokol was banned three times: during World War I, during the Nazi occupation and finally by the communists after 1948, but branches of the organization continued to exist abroad. Sokol was restored in 1990.

20 Terezin Initiative Foundation (Nadace Terezinska iniciativa)
Founded in 1993 by the International Association of Former Prisoners of the Terezin/Theresienstadt Ghetto, it is a special institute devoted to the scientific research on the history of Terezin and of the 'Final Solution of the Jewish Question' in the Czech lands. At the end of 1998 it was renamed to Terezin Initiative Institute (Institut Terezinske iniciativy).

21 Subcarpathian Ruthenia
is found in the region where the Carpathian Mountains meet the Central Dnieper Lowlands. Its larger towns are Beregovo, Mukacevo and Hust. Up until the First World War the region belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, but in the year 1919, according to the St. Germain peace treaty, was made a part of Czechoslovakia. Exact statistics regarding ethnic and linguistic composition of the population aren't available. Between the two World Wars Ruthenia's inhabitants included Hungarians, Ruthenians, Russians, Ukrainians, Czechs and Slovaks, plus numerous Jewish and Gypsy communities. The first Viennese Arbitration (1938) gave Hungary that part of Ruthenia inhabited by Hungarians. The remainder of the region gained autonomy within Czechoslovakia, and was occupied by Hungarian troops. In 1944 the Soviet Army and local resistance units took power in Ruthenia. According to an agreement dated June 29, 1945, Czechoslovakia ceded the region to the Soviet Union. Up until 1991 it was a part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. After Ukraine declared its independence, it became one of the country's administrative regions.

22 Nemcova, Bozena (1820–1862)
born Barbora Panklova in Vienna into the family of Johann Pankl, a nobleman's coachman. She was significantly influenced by her upbringing at the hands of her grandmother Magdalena Novotna during the years 1825-29. In 1837 she was married to financial official Josef Nemec. She contributed to a number of magazines. She was inspired by traditional folk stories to write seven collections of folk tales and legends and ten collections of Slovak fairy-tales and legends, which are generally a gripping fictional adaptation of fairy-tale themes. Through her works Nemcova has to her credit the bringing together of the Czech and Slovak nations and their cultures. She is the author of travelogues and ethnographic sketches, realistic stories of the countryside (Crazy Bara, Mountain Village, Karla, The Teacher, At The Chateau and The Village Below) and the supreme novel Granny. Thanks to her rich folkloristic work and particularly her work Granny, Bozena Nemcova has taken her place among Czech national icons.

23 Statni Tajna Bezpecnost
Czech intelligence and security service founded in 1948.

24 Czech Scout Movement
The first Czech scout group was founded in 1911. In 1919 a number of separate scout

organizations fused to form the Junak Association, into which all scout organizations of the Czechoslovak Republic were merged in 1938. In 1940 the movement was liquidated by a decree of the State Secretary. After WWII the movement revived briefly until it was finally dissolved in 1950. The Junak Association emerged again in 1968 and was liquidated in 1970. It was reestablished after the Velvet Revolution of 1989.

25 Radio Free Europe

Radio station launched in 1949 at the instigation of the US government with headquarters in West Germany. The radio broadcast uncensored news and features, produced by Central and Eastern European émigrés, from Munich to countries of the Soviet block. The radio station was jammed behind the Iron Curtain, team members were constantly harassed and several people were killed in terrorist attacks by the KGB. Radio Free Europe played a role in supporting dissident groups, inner resistance and will of freedom in the Eastern and Central European communist countries and thus it contributed to the downfall of the totalitarian regimes of the Soviet block. The headquarters of the radio have been in Prague since 1994.

26 Samizdat literature in Czechoslovakia

Samizdat literature: The secret publication and distribution of government-banned literature in the former Soviet block. Typically, it was typewritten on thin paper (to facilitate the production of as many carbon copies as possible) and circulated by hand, initially to a group of trusted friends, who then made further typewritten copies and distributed them clandestinely. Material circulated in this way included fiction, poetry, memoirs, historical works, political treatises, petitions, religious tracts, and journals. The penalty for those accused of being involved in samizdat activities varied according to the political climate, from harassment to detention or severe terms of imprisonment. In Czechoslovakia, there was a boom in Samizdat literature after 1948 and, in particular, after 1968, with the establishment of a number of Samizdat editions supervised by writers, literary critics and publicists: Petlice (editor L. Vaculik), Expedice (editor J. Lopatka), as well as, among others, Ceska expedice (Czech Expedition), Popelnice (Garbage Can) and Prazska imaginace (Prague Imagination).

27 Prague Spring

A period of democratic reforms in Czechoslovakia, from January to August 1968. Reformatory politicians were secretly elected to leading functions of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSC). Josef Smrkovsky became president of the National Assembly, and Oldrich Cernik became the Prime Minister. Connected with the reformist efforts was also an important figure on the Czechoslovak political scene, Alexander Dubcek, General Secretary of the KSC Central Committee (UV KSC). In April 1968 the UV KSC adopted the party’s Action Program, which was meant to show the new path to socialism. It promised fundamental economic and political reforms. On 21st March 1968, at a meeting of representatives of the USSR, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, East Germany and Czechoslovakia in Dresden, Germany, the Czechoslovaks were notified that the course of events in their country was not to the liking of the remaining conference participants, and that they should implement appropriate measures. In July 1968 a meeting in Warsaw took place, where the reformist efforts in Czechoslovakia were designated as “counter-revolutionary.” The invasion of the USSR and Warsaw Pact armed forces on the night of 20th August 1968, and the signing of the so-

called Moscow Protocol ended the process of democratization, and the Normalization period began.

28 Solidarity (NSZZ Solidarnosc)
a social and political movement in Poland that opposed the authority of the PZPR. In its institutional form – the Independent Self-Governing Trade Union Solidarity (NSZZ Solidarnosc) – it emerged in August and September 1980 as a product of the turbulent national strikes. In that period trade union organization were being formed in all national enterprises and institutions; in all some 9–10 million people joined NSZZ Solidarnosc. Solidarity formulated a program of introducing fundamental changes to the system in Poland, and sought the fulfillment of its postulates by exerting various forms of pressure on the authorities: pickets in industrial enterprises and public buildings, street demonstrations, negotiations and propaganda. It was outlawed in 1982 following the introduction of Martial Law (on 13 December 1981), and until 1989 remained an underground organization, adopting the strategy of gradually building an alternative society and over time creating social institutions that would be independent of the PZPR (the long march). Solidarity was the most important opposition group that influenced the changes in the Polish political system in 1989.

29 Velvet Revolution
Also known as November Events, this term is used for the period between 17th November and 29th December 1989, which resulted in the downfall of the Czechoslovak communist regime. A non-violent political revolution in Czechoslovakia that meant the transition from Communist dictatorship to democracy. The Velvet Revolution began with a police attack against Prague students on 17th November 1989. That same month the citizen's democratic movement Civic Forum (OF) in Czech and Public Against Violence (VPN) in Slovakia were formed. On 10th December a government of National Reconciliation was established, which started to realize democratic reforms. On 29th December Vaclav Havel was elected president. In June 1990 the first democratic elections since 1948 took place.

30 Havel, Vaclav (1936-)
Czech dramatist, poet and politician. Havel was an active figure in the liberalization movement leading to the Prague Spring, and after the Soviet-led intervention in 1968 he became a spokesman of the civil right movement called Charter 77. He was arrested for political reasons in 1977 and 1979. He became President of the Czech and Slovak Republic in 1989 and was President of the Czech Republic after the secession of Slovakia until January 2003.

31 Knazko, Milan (1945-)
Slovak actor, politician and director of TV JOJ. In October 1989 Knazko was the first and only person in the CSSR to return the title Meritorious Artist due to his disagreement with the politics of the regime at the time. In November 1989 he entered the political events of the time. He was an adviser to President Vaclav Havel and simultaneously a member of the CSFR's Federal Assembly. From June 1990 to 28th August 1990 he was Minister of International Relations of the Slovak Republic and from 1992–1993 deputy premier of the government of the Slovak Republic and Slovak Foreign Minister. From March 1993 to October 1998 he was a member of the Slovak Republic's

National Assembly and for four years from the year 1998 held the post of Minister of Culture of the Slovak Republic. (Source: http://sk.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milan_K%C5%88a%C5%BEko)

32 Yad Vashem

This museum, founded in 1953 in Jerusalem, honors both Holocaust martyrs and 'the Righteous Among the Nations', non-Jewish rescuers who have been recognized for their 'compassion, courage and morality'.