

NEIGHBOURS WHO DISAPPEARED

Velhartice



We have a small girls' group in Velhartice and when we were offered the project 'Neighbours Who Disappeared' by the basic school I asked the girls if they wanted to set about dealing with it. They did and so we set off to follow the traces of the neighbours who disappeared.



One of our first expeditions led to the Jewish cemetery that is just beyond the town. Some of us had been here before but now we came here with a new interest and expectation. At the small cemetery we tried to find the tombstones of those whom we had heard about.



We were with Mrs Prunerová and Ms Hosnedl who remembered their Jewish classmates. They told us about Lili Kingrová whose story attracted our attention.



We learned more about Jewish culture as a lecturer in the Museum of Simon Adler and in the Education and Culture Centre of the Jewish Museum. We met Mrs Eva Erbenová who survived the Holocaust and we saw a film about her. Mrs Erbenová accepted our invitation and visited Velhartice, too.

▼ The list of the Jewish victims on the memorial that was built at the Jewish cemetery in Velhartice in 1948

*Ženám umučeních Židů na památníku
postaveném v 1948 na velhartickém
židovském hřbitově*

- Marie Pollaková, nar. 27.9.1862 - Velhartice
- Vilém Pollak, nar. 1.8.1872 - Velhartice
- Robert Sabal, nar. 14.6.1879 - Velhartice
- Paula Pollaková, nar. 13.1.1881 -
- Marie Sabalová, nar. 15.9.1881 -
- Viktor Druckx, nar. 27.8.1888 -
- Růžena Druckrová, nar. 24.12.1892 -
- Elsa Pollaková, nar. 16.2.1893 -
- Arnošt Kojlaš, nar. 3.9.1896 -
- Dr. Vilém Pollak, nar. 25.9.1894 -
- Bedřich Pollak, nar. 17.3.1905 -
- Martha Kojlašová, nar. 7.10.1907 -
- Elza Pollaková, nar. 16.7.1909 - Velhartice
- Dr. Emil Pollak, nar. 3.4.1911 - Velhartice
- Kamka Krausová, nar. 30.1.1915 - Velhartice
- Martha Pollaková, nar. 27.6.1917 - Velhartice
- Marie Pollaková, nar. 19.11.1919 - Velhartice
- Arnošt Druckx, nar. 16.10.1926 - Velhartice
- Liliana Kingrová, nar. 3.7.1928 - Velhartice**
- Arnošt Kojlaš, nar. 3.12.1929 -
- Pavel Pollak, nar. 16.12.1929 - Velhartice**
- Erich Kojlaš, nar. 11.5.1932 -
- Kana Pollaková, nar. 12.5.1932 - Velhartice**
- Miša Kraus, nar. 25.1.1935 - Velhartice



We found interesting articles in the press of that time and other documents: The Municipal Office in Velhartice. To all the merchants and the confectioners in Velhartice. This notice determines: Any paid or free of charge issue of any kind of fresh, dried or otherwise conserved fruit including dried fruits and nuts, further of marmalades, jams, sweets, fish and fish products of all kinds, conserved as well, is prohibited to the Jews. This ban is equally valid for cultivators, producers, manufacturers and processors, merchants as well as for consumers.



The last photograph of the class including Jewish children in Velhartice that we found. 1. Lili Kingrová, 2. Pavel Pollak, 3. Mrs Prunerová, 4. Mr Hosnedl, 5. Hanka Poltáková

Why did we choose Lili's story? When Lili was leaving for Prague she was as old as the girls. We also enjoyed the narration of Alena's grandmother. I think it is important for the girls to consider that children of the same age had totally different worlds, that their fate was hard and came unfortunately to... such a tragic end.

Lili was born on 3 July 1928. Her mother, Jidy Kingrová, died after her delivery in the Klášov hospital. Afterwards Lili got the name after her mother, too. Lili was left alone only with her governess. Mrs Prunerová remembers that Lili used to bring big snacks to school, which she always shared with her. She does not remember exactly when Lili stopped attending the school but it was probably at the beginning of a school year as she knows that though the Jewish children stopped going to school, this didn't happen from one day to the next. Lili is said to have been deported together with the other children and Jewish families to Klášov. All the Jews were concentrated there in the trade school, from where they were transported to Terezín. We know that most Jews were deported from Terezín to Auschwitz, where they perished. We found out that Lili's name was neither on the lists of deportation transports from Klášov to Terezín, nor mentioned together with Dr Vilém Pollak in the Pinkas Synagogue in Prague, though we found the other names on our memorial in Velhartice there.

At first we thought Lili's story would end more hopefully than the fate of most Velhartice Jews. Finally we learned that the Jewish family of the Pollaks got a secret message probably from the concentration place of the Jews deported to extermination camps at the very beginning of the war: I am here alone without my aunt. Only my friend "Bock-everything and Hunger" is here with me. We deduced from this that Lili was transported to one of the camps.



President Václav Havel received us at the Prague Castle in October 2000.



We gave him the original of our work.



In June 2001 Mrs Erbenová came to us again: "Girls I am glad to be among you again. When I saw your work I was deeply touched," she told us.



And so you could see us in the Czech Television documentary film on the project 'Neighbours Who Disappeared'. This can be borrowed from the Education and Culture Centre of The Jewish Museum.

Girls' Christian group

Miša and Vilča Brandts, Alča and Magda Rechs, Lenka Petříková, Anička Pancevová, Jana Hosnedlová under the leadership of Ivona Brožová

