



Prievoz Cemetery.

The favorite color of the tulips is bright red. The red, white, and blue landscape looks quite gay. The cemetery is also filled with new color. It has all happened quite suddenly within the past week of warm breezes.

June 9

Whole families are out in the evenings and on weekends climbing cherry trees to pick the bright red harvest. Some of the fruit is consumed fresh. More, we are told, is preserved for cooking and baking throughout the year. This week, friends and neighbors brought us great bowls of fresh cherries five or six times. We have had cherry compote nearly every night for dessert.

June 10

We passed the convent on our walk this evening and in the garden saw a crowd. They were celebrating first communion with all the little girls in white and the nuns in black kneeling behind the crowd. The streets bordering the convent garden were strewn with rose petals where people, lining the route, had showered an earlier parade.

June 17

The linden trees are in bloom and have been for 2 or 3 weeks. Their flowers give off a fresh, sweet scent that fills the village streets and attracts the buzzing bees, especially in the cemetery where we hear them in the quiet evenings. The linden blossoms are used here to make a soothing, medicinal tea.

THE ESSENTIAL CONNECTION TO NATURE

My journal entries document the three seasons we spent in Bratislava, enough to compare the rhythms and rituals of life in two completely different places. The rhythm of village life in Prievoz is complex. People work daily outside the village, most commuting by bus to other parts of the surrounding city. But in the evenings, on holidays, and on weekends, they also have an intense village

life. Partly it centers on collective actions in public places like streets, shops, the church, and the cemetery. Another part of village life focuses on individual actions in personal spaces, especially the ubiquitous private garden. No single beat seems to dominate life. Seasons, of course, assert a very strong influence; but really it is a combination of natural and contrived beats that offers manifold chances to develop ritual expressions of self and group.

By comparison, the rhythm of life in Petrzalka is simple. Unlike Prievoz, there is little gathered life in the place: no church, cemetery, or streets lined with cherry trees. Just as in Prievoz, people leave Petrzalka daily to work elsewhere. But many commute in isolation by car because the location is so remote and poorly connected to the rest of the city. A single daily measure dominates Petrzalka: to work and back. Otherwise, life is for the most part lived inside a flat like a thousand other flats. There are no gardens or cherry harvests in Petrzalka to remind people of the passing seasons. There is slight evidence of ritual in the lives of people.

Slovaks, of course, understand the forfeitures of life in Petrzalka, and those who can afford it take traditional actions to make up for them. It is estimated that 40 percent of Bratislava's apartment dwellers, including those in Petrzalka, migrate to dachas in foothills north of the city. These cottages, often only one room, are nearly always in a garden. Here, the family tradition of planting, tending, and harvesting fresh fruits and vegetables from their own garden is sustained and bestowed upon children.

A SPECIAL SUMMER PLACE

Jana Kepplová tells a typical story of summer cottages, of longing to be closer to nature. Their dacha has been in the family for three generations. It is a well-built stone and wood two-story structure containing several rooms. The surrounding garden is generous, with space for vegetables, flowers, and a small orchard. She de-