

Fritz Kúnkel in Germany

by daughter, Ruth-Maria Kúnkel Lipski



Fritz and Ruth Kúnkel in 1920, the newlyweds in Bavaria, Germany.

In 1921 Peter was born in Altstatten and Wulf in Eichenau in 1923. Fritz and Ruth studied Psychology under Alfred Adler, and in 1925 they moved to Falkenried 10, 12, 14 in Berlin-Dahlem, where they lived for two years, and where I was born. In this house (see the photo) they opened the Adler Institute, and had many meetings about Adler's Individual-Psychology, and Fritz had a thriving practice as a psychiatric therapist.



By that time, he had published several books including Einführung in Die Charakterkunde in 1928. They lived briefly in a place in Berlin-Steglitz, and then in the Paulsenstrasse, Berlin-Wilmersdorf where they lived until 1932. In 1931 he published Jugend Charakterkunde, and dedicated it to Ruth Kúnkel. On January 22nd, 1932 Ruth died. At the end of that year, Fritz married Elisabeth Jensen and our family moved to Berlin-Charlottenburg, Kaiserdamm 102 where Fritz had a thriving practice until June 1939 when he came to the USA. During that time, Elisabeth gave birth to Jochen and Eckie who later changed their names to John and Bill when they became US citizens.

While he gave himself totally to his patients during his practice, he also gave time to his family. He shared all of his meals with us and at the dinner table we had meaningful discussions. For example, he pointed out to us the advantages of overcoming egocentricity! On Sundays, we went for walks together as a family. When we lived in Wilmersdorf we went to the Grunewald. Later on, we had a row boat with an attachable motor. We had the boat for three years (1933-36), which was anchored at the Wannsee. Sundays were spent on that boat. Summer vacations were always spent at the beach of the Baltic Sea starting in 1928. See the photo below of Fritz and Ruth in the water in 1929.



Walking distance from our apartment on the Kaiserdamm was the beautiful Lietzensee Park. Before seeing his patients on weekdays, Fritz would go for walks in this park in the mornings. Here, I am sure, his thoughts on the We-Psychology came to fruition, and in 1938 his last book in Germany, Das Wir, was published.

He was also a great story teller. He told us children stories he made up as he was telling them. He was just as excited about them as we were, and never knew how they would end. They often were about White Giants and Black Giants who were fighting with each other. These giants were actually representing the good and bad character traits that were within all people, and also in us. We should try to let the good ones win.

Fritz's parents had an estate in the countryside East of Berlin, in Gennin, a small village near Landsberg, a. d. Warthe (now Poland). Fritz inherited a strip of land of this estate. Here he had a house built which was ready for us to move into in February 1938. While Fritz saw his patients on weekdays in his practice in Berlin, weekends were always spent with us in this house in Gennin. Behind our house was a grass covered hill, on top of which was a huge rock. His parents had made this rock into a memorial for their son, Erich, who had lost his life in World War I. Erich's name was etched into this rock. Fritz loved to sit on this rock in contemplation. Jochen and I loved to roll down this grassy hill for fun. The child in Fritz joined us and rolled down also.

The first photo below shows Fritz with Jochen, myself, and my cousin Fitzlie sitting on that rock. Beneath that the photo shows Fritz on the rock alone in contemplation. Beneath that photo is another photo where you can see him rolling down that grassy hill. These three photos were taken in the spring of 1939.





In June 1939 Fritz left for a lecture tour to the USA, which was arranged by the Quakers. He was expected to return in September. However, the war interfered, and he never came back. And thus, our family was split up. In 1949, our family was reunited in the United States!

