Dr. Margarete Brandt

I donot remember our first meeting in 1925. I was very sick and could not speak. I was one year old and had pneumonia. Dr. Brandt was a young doctor. She was already on the way back to the station (Dahlemdorf) on an icy road, but was called back: my heart was failing. She arrived in time to give me an injection and stayed to see ma through. She came again the next day, and the next, till I was well.

Contrary to our first meeting, I remember every word of our last one, a little over fifty years later, shortly before she died. The first meeting took place at home, in Dahlem, near Berlin. The last one in a clinic called Europa, in Jerusalem.

We arrived from Paris and were told that it was too late to see her: she no longer spoke nor recognized any one. We insisted and wentminto her room. She was very pale, didnot move and seemed not to hear us. I bent over her and murmured 'Dotta' (the name I gave her when I started to speak and couldnot pronouce 'Doctor') Dotta! She stirred. I whispered 'Dein Goldfasan' (your gold pheasant), her little name for me. She opened her eyes: Dorli! (my name as a child). Our exchange was a coded one one between two secret agents from the land of happy times. She tried to sit up, saw my husband, said his name 'Jacques', as if he had been one of us children in the garden half a century ago. She reached for my hand: 'Your mother arranged this meeting*, she said joyously. My mother died fifteen years ago. A smile crossed her face: she loved my mother and was happy to speak of her. I patted her pillow to make her more comfortable. She closed her eyes and fell asleep still smiling. We returned the next day. 'Dotta! Dein Goldfasan!' She came out of her lethargic sleep with that look of wonder she always had. This time she tired more quickly. I spoke of my mother. She looked happy: she had news from a dearly loved one, and again fell asleep smiling. It was to be the last time we saw her.

I am eighty-five, and perhaps one of the last able to tell those of you, the older ones, how beautiful the youngedoctor, whom you only knew as an old woman, was. As to the younger ones, she is just a legend, like Max and Vera Eitingon with whom she came to Jerusalem in 1933 to create the Palestine Institute of Psychoanalysis in Abyssinia st. Max Eitingon died in 1943, leaving Dr. Brandt in charge. After the war of independee, they had to leave and find a new home for the Institute and themselves: Friedel the young sister of 'Dotta' had come to join them. They had been happy in Abyssinia st. and were on good terms with their Arab

neighbours. It was a different period and 'Dotta's' approach to everyone was so warm, open, always ready to learn. Their Arab cleaning woman loved them, and when there was a food shortage, she brought vegetables from her village and always a fresh-laid egg in a safe place, between her breasts

They did not believe their eyes when they saw the beautiful villa that had been allocated to them: the Israeli government had paid a lump sum for the properties that had been abandoned in the western suburbs as the city was taken by the legion of Glubb Pasha, and the Jews driven out. A lump sum ... That didnot satisfy the Brandt sisters. They spent a lot of time trying to find out to whom the house had belonged: no easy matter with non-existent communications with Jordan. They finally got the name of the family of the former owners, who had not lived there at the time of the war. Only a nephew could finally be located. The others were no longer alive. They wrote to the nephew, or great-nephew to tell him how much they loved the house, and that the palm tree was growing well, looked after by the head gardener of the King Davidehotel. They had some money transferred to him, via Germany, I believe. They didnot have much, but felt that they owed him something.

The house meant a great deal to 'Dotta', as I was to see many years late when very ill, she wanted to sign the act - a sollicitor had come - giving her apartment to the Institute. Both she and Friedel had felt strongly about reaching out to the house's former owner. They shared a sense of justice and a terrific sense of humour. 'Dotta' had a huge stock of funny stories for and from her patients. She knew that a big laugh together was a help in all relationships and therapy. Friedel wrote children's books. Funny and successful.

The sense of justice was probably inborn, and also due to the childhood years in a princely house in Poland, where their father who had studied agronomy, had accepted a job as manager of a vast estate: woods, lakes, farmland. My husband and I have seen photographs in an album, that must have gone to her relative in Israel. The Brandt family returned to Berlin for the schooling of the girls- high school. Berlin must have seemed rather dral after the splendour of their Polish home. 'Dotta' was a brilliant student, equally talented for schoolgirl pranks. She wanted to be a doctor - her medical studies took place during world war I and in the early twenties. When she started working in hospitals, she saw poverty, undernourished children.

She discovered that she was addicted to babies, children. She once told me that if she didnot manage to get a child to smile, she was desperate! She visited sick children in poor neighbourhoods, climbed endless stairs, worked long hours, and finally fell ill. Both she and her sister had TB. She put all her energy into getting well so as to be able to work. But no more stair climbing and night hours.

In 1925, I was one of the lucky ones whom she still visited, but not at night and Dahlem was not exactly a poor neighbourhood. She was, as I said, addicted to babies and I was, apparently a rather nice one. My older sister an attractive child. The grateful parents soon, friends. Would she come back? We didnot even have to be sick! She wanted a baby's smile? I smiled, hugged, kissed. Gave her a name that was to last all her life. And as with her there was always a bit of magis -Her psychoanalyst, Max Eitingon, one of Freud's early disciples, lived round the corner. Max Eitingon was a zionist as was my father. Did they influence her, or had she already made up & her mind? I don't know. But I do know that we shared wonderful Sunday lunch, often served in the garden.And when shesfinally settleddin a deck-chair for a rest, we children jumped on her lap and didnot let her sleep, begging for stories of awful children - bad ones, very bad ones, mad ones! We were insatiable. And she loved to make us happy, imitating the stuttering ones, the dirty ones. We little monsters roared with laughter.

And when we were very sick, one on the first floor in quarantime, the other on the ground floor, she spent the night with me in the dining room, and giving instructions for the care of my sister on the first floor. Being sick was a treat!

When we left for Paris for the first time in 1931, mother had a 'mademoiselle' for a couple of months to teach us a little French. But it was 'Dotta' who taught us the one useful word :'merde'; She left with Max and Vera Eitingon in 1933 for Jerusalem, at the same time we left Germany for good. The parents and 'Dotta' kept up a correspondence throughout the years, and she remained very present to us children. I noted in my childish journal that Dotta's mother, Amalia, whom we knew quite well, had died in the summer of 1934. Dotta wrote to us children too, from time to time.

She came to Europe after the war. I have a recollection of fetching her at the Gare Saint-Lazare in Paris, she had come from my parents' in

Logdon. She and my husband, Jacques, were friends immediately. We saw her every year or two. Once, I remember she took me to a beautiful staging of the 'Avare'. Molière was one of her favourite authors. In 1959, on our first visit to Israel, she was away on a trip to Spitzberg. We stayed with Friedel for a few days in Disraeli street, sleeping under Vera Eitingon's portrait. It was the time of the very neurotic, beautiful Collie, Dagon — a local celebrity that all the children wanted to take for a walk. On this first visit, friedel showed us what could be seen of the old city, through barbed wire. Her own favourite haunts: the fields, that were to become gardens, where she found roman pennies and fragments of ancient mosaic. She took us to tea at the King David, to see through the barbed wire at the bottom of the garden the no man's land between Israel and Jordan

Friedel came to Europe with us, on the same boat. A memorable trip. She went on to London to see my parents, since my father was not well and couldnot travel anymore. They had last been in Israel in 1953 father gave a series of lectures and they saw old friends. E.F. best known in Israel for his book 'Justice for my People' - a well known International lawyer, died a few months after Friedel's visit. The Israeli press wrote moving obituaries.

We went to see . the Brandt sisters at least once a year. Friedel's health was failing. She died in 1970. We were shattered and worried about Dotta. They had been so close and Friedel had made her work, or Father overwork possible . I went to Israel in time to be there for Dotta's return from her first trip abroad since Friedel's death, that year. It was just before a Jewish holiday and I was afraid she would have transport difficulties. To my astonishment there were quite a number of people at the airport, waiting for the same plane. In fact they all waited for her! I didnot know that she had so many wonderful friends who all wanted to drive her home! They squeezed me in one of the cars. When she and I were finally alone, I suggested preparing a snack. Dotta had bought a new toaster. We inaugurated it, but the shices of toast jumped and fell on the floor. I was on all fours, she directing me: there, no there! from her chair, we were laughing, and finally crying, thinking of Friedel who would have enjoyed the scene. We were still able to cry and laugh with Dotta for several: years.

We bitterly regretted not to have built a small one-room ffat over

their apartment as they had suggeted - and be close to them, when in Israel. Dotta, had long ago, forgiven me for having grown up. She had, even in times of grief, remained the magician she had always been. Right to the end she could transform misery into a glorious day. Look at the sun, you little idios! Did you ever see it shine so bright?

In the course of the years, she told us quite a lot about her work. Neither Eitingon nor Freud had had any idea, she said, that many of the rules would be inapplicable. Paying the analyst — even a small sum, like any medical act ... They didnot live to see a society where people didnot have the money for a meal. Should they go mad as wells as hungry? The multitude of languages spoken, hebrew not mastered, the mother tongue forgotten, the general impoverished vocabulary. How could you deal with a problem you cannot define? How to help patients who donot understand the difference between envy and jealousy?

After a long life, one is apt to doubt about one's achievements. But I am certain of one brilliant act: to have had pneumonia at the age of one. My life and that of my family were enriched thanks to the beautiful young doctor who came that day. My sister Adel (Adelheid) became a child psychologist. My parents, Ernst and Ilse Frankenstein — had a wonderful friend — She was proud of every book he published, was with him in his fight against the British white paper, and after the war, to let the sarvivors into the 'national home'. My mother was the last person she spoke of.

It is difficult to end these few words about Margarete Brandt. I'll do so with one of our favourite pictures of her. In 1971, a year after Friedel died, she accepted to come with us to Vulpera in the Engadine. We decided to pick her up at her hotel in Zürich. Owing to heavy traffic, we were late. Dr. Brandt, please? - She is still in the dining room. The room was empty. Just one old lady, head down, like an abandoned child. I yelled 'Dotta!' The old lady had disappeared. There was a radiant woman, eyes shining. We ran towards her. She was up so fast with hugs, kisses and joy in her beautiful eyes. The next day we drove through the most adortious mountain landscape. She sat in front, next to Jacques, turning round to me on the back seat from time to time with a radiant smile: We have made it, children!

Bettina Frankenstein-Roth

Bettina Frankenstein R.H.