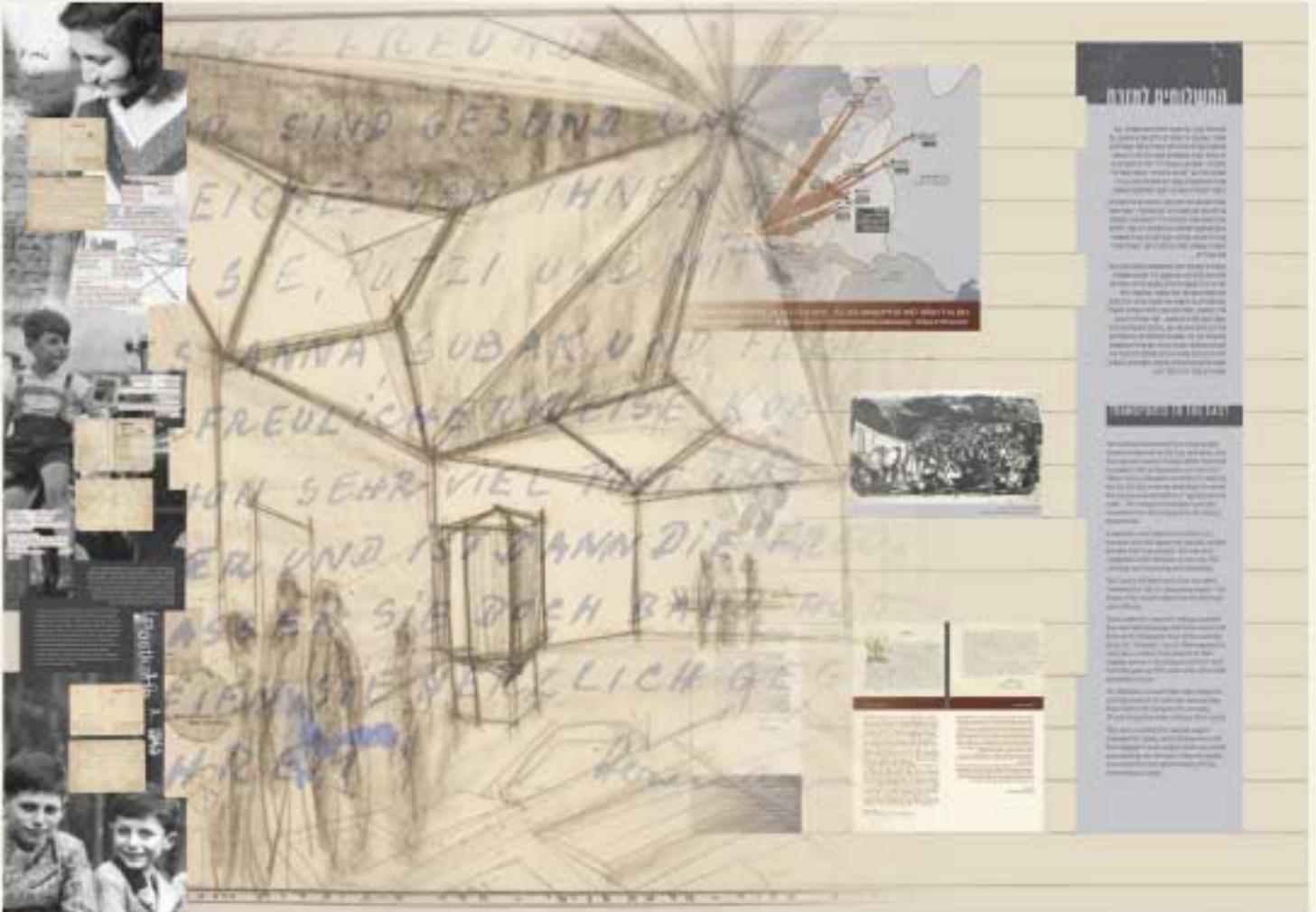




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These days we are in the midst of a process of renewal and changes at Beit Theresienstadt. The changes are proceeding by measured and careful steps, striving continuously to preserve the spirit of the place and the special atmosphere of this house and to go on to realize the goals set by the founders at its inauguration.

The planning for the renewal began six years ago and, parallel to the growing stack of blueprints in a drawer which became more and more crowded, we started to raise money, mainly from the Claims Conference, for the realization. We needed a few years to overcome the financial straits and even today, in the midst of the work, we are still in need of further financing and donations to enable us to finish the project.

For the first time after many years the campus of Beit Theresienstadt grows by the building of a new classroom. On its walls the exhibition Kamarad - they Called it Friend will be re-installed and so Beit Theresienstadt will be able to display concurrently four exhibitions. The three others are: The new permanent exhibition now being prepared for the Historic Museum, the exhibition Drawing on the Pages of Time 1942 - 1945 in the exhibition hall and the traveling exhibition of Alfred Kantor's paintings Color in Gray at the small classroom. At the present time the team of Beit Theresienstadt invests most of its energies to finish the new display for the Historic Museum. More on this in a separate item.

This is the occasion to mention those whose generous support enables us to function and develop. The new classroom became possible through the donation of Ruth Federmann nee Steckelmacher and her son Ami Federmann, in memory of Ruth's family: her mother and brother who were sent to ghetto Theresienstadt and her relatives, the Lederer family, who perished in the Holocaust in unknown circumstances.

A memorial plaque will be installed in the classroom. The financing of the new classroom was supplemented by a grant of the Culture Administration of the Education Ministry and by the Claims Conference.

A generous donation for development and renewal of Beit Theresienstadt was received also from Asher and Avraham Shlain. The Shlain family is commemorating their dear ones Sheindl Hoffman, Gitl Korn and Avraham Mordechai Goffman who perished in the Holocaust in Poland.

Among the leading contributors is Mr. Charles Petschek from New York, who supports the development and renewal project since 2005 and pledged personally to continue to donate for the next five years.

We received the first contributions for the development project in 2005 from the members of our association in Israel and abroad, who donated generously but requested to remain anonymous. Throughout the years we receive donations from many members, each according to his or her possibilities - our sincere thanks to all of them.

After a lengthy discussion by the steering committee of our association it was decided to affix a memorial plaque on an outside wall of Beit Theresienstadt's campus, bearing the names of those the donors want to be remembered. This plaque will enable our members and friends to perpetuate the memory of their dear ones through a contribution to the development and renewal project of Beit Theresienstadt.

Those interested may apply to members of the steering committee: David Magen, phone: 052-6130730 or to Gabi Elad-Alter, phone: 050-5244505 or to Anita Tarsi, Beit Theresienstadt. ■

## THANKS

Our thanks to the following Israeli ministries and funds that support the activities and development of Beit Theresienstadt in various fields:

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Israel
- Ministry of Education - Israel
- Ministry of Science, Culture and Sport - Israel
- Claims Conference Against Germany
- Gertner Fund
- Atid Fund - Government of Austria
- Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
- Fonds "Erinnerung und Zukunft"
- Regional Council Emek Hefer

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## ON THE COVER

Albin Glaser - Sketch of Beit Theresienstadt Museum with fragments from the new exhibition



### "History, Music and Memory" - 8th Seminar

From July 29, to August 3, the eighth seminar "History, Music and Memory" will be held; with the participation of 30 young musicians from Israel and abroad. They will study the historical context in which musical works were created in ghetto Theresienstadt, perform and discuss music banned by the Nazis and talk about the special role of the third generation regarding commemoration of the Holocaust. For the last four years the music director of the seminar is the cellist Dr. Dudu Sella. Further details at our home page: [www.bterezin.org.il](http://www.bterezin.org.il) ■

### Meeting "Women and Holocaust" in October

From October 29, to 31, for the fourth time, the international meeting "Women and Holocaust" will be held, its subject will be Childhood and Youth under the the Third Reich - a gender perspective. The meeting is a common project of Beit Theresienstadt, Beit Berl College and The Ghetto Fighter's Museum. A short time ago a book was published, following these meetings in previous years, with a collection of articles on the subject, in Hebrew. For details see our homepage. ■

### Teacher's Training on the Subject "Holocaust" for Arab Teachers

An education project of coexistence continues for four years already, organized together with the pedagogical team of "Ramot Hefer" high school at kibbutz Maabarot and the "Ibn Sina" high school in Kalansawa. A teacher's training on the subject "Holocaust" offered to teachers of the Arab sector will be held in this coming year. The activities for coexistence are supported by the "Atid" fund of the Austrian Republic. ■

### Survivor's Testimonies Project Together with the Regional Council Emek Hefer

Beit Theresienstadt, founded to commemorate the prisoners of ghetto Theresienstadt, was established in a region where there is no other Holocaust commemoration institution. For this reason we took upon ourselves to be a home for Shoah survivors and the following generations from Emek Hefer and to become a regional center for Holocaust commemoration and education. For ten years now we have an "open house" on Holocaust Day for the surrounding communities and members of our association. Over these years a captivating dialog developed between Theresienstadt survivors and others. Among the visitors on these open days are survivors from the region who - for lack of an appropriate venue - for many years did not relate their experiences. The dialog is a sort of support and consolation for many of them. The connection between Beit Theresienstadt and the Council is expanding also to further initiatives, among them a common project of interviews for the documentation center of the Council. The project headed by Gerard Lafond is realized by Beit Theresienstadt and Yad Vashem. In its framework 91 survivors were videotaped, up to now. These days we plan a number of common activities with the community center of the Regional Council, headed by Yael Peled. ■



### Upgrade and Reorganization of our Archives

Sima Shahar leads the process of digitization of the audio and video tapes in our archives, these include films and testimonies, interviews, music and more. At the same time we started intensively to list documents and catalogs, to scan and store them in our safes. As part of her duties Sima also instructs students and researchers using our archives. Sima invests in these activities much time and thought and her assistance directs the visitors to use the material from our archives efficiently and creatively.

We also want to mention our volunteers/members who dedicate their time day after day translating documents, memoirs, diaries and books. Most of the material is translated and typed directly into the computer, but some of our volunteers still prefer the typewriter. The print-outs are then inputted into a computer for digital storage. ■



"Open House" at Beit Theresienstadt

### Common Czech-Israeli Database of Theresienstadt Prisoners

Alisah Schiller and Michal Frankl from the "Terezinska Iniciativa" work on the completion of a common database with all personal details of Theresienstadt prisoners. It will include the combined data of Beit Theresienstadt and the "Terezinska Uniciativa" in the Czech Republic.

The common database will enrich the research possibilities and enhance the service we are able to offer to families looking for details of their loved ones imprisoned in the ghetto and their fate. This service works now for a long time already and is used by many. In the last years e-mail is the main channel through which requests arrive and are answered. Following the details received from our database quite a number of people joined our association as members. ■



## Renewal of the Education Center at Beit Theresienstadt

The team of Beit Theresienstadt is also changing. Yael Lahav from kibbutz Maabarot, of the third generation, (granddaughter of Ruth and Hanan Bachrich) will coordinate the educational activities. She will be assisted by our secretary Anat Elazar, who deals with the marketing of our education program and is our contact with schools.

The preparations of the Education Center for the upcoming school year (2007/2008) have already started though the schools are on vacation - but this is the time to begin thinking about the study days for the next year, train the team of educators, refresh and renew the teaching material, also for exposure to audiences which we did not reach in the past.

During the last years a broad base of schools "loyal" to Beit Theresienstadt and its education system evolved and every year further schools join this group. In addition to study days, the Education Center deals also with personal guidance of high school students and assistance to students, researchers and teachers. Beit Theresienstadt is by now well-known among those interested, as a place ready to accommodate itself to their needs, a source of knowledge and a rich archive, a base for a number of exciting subjects and new research. Film and theater producers and also representatives of museums the world over approach us quite often to use our material for films, performances and exhibitions. ■

## Honored for Outstanding Educational Work: Holocaust Teaching at Beit Theresienstadt Museum

Dr. Margalit Shlain

For four years now the team of the Education Center of Beit Theresienstadt pursues an educational project of co-existence, combining Holocaust studies for middle schools, together with the pedagogic team of "Ramot Hefer" middle school at kibbutz Maabarot and the "Ibn Sina" middle school in Kalansawa, headed by Otman Hatib. The project is supported by the "Atid" fund of the Austrian Republic. In the framework of this project Jewish and Arab students studied together the subject of Holocaust, visited the historic museum and the exhibition "Drawing on Pages of Time" - artistic creations from ghetto Theresienstadt by members of the Groag family. They also viewed films and listened together to the testimony of a Holocaust survivor.

The students internalized the meaning of the Holocaust, they discussed their impressions and expressed them in art workshops and created a common logo. They also participated in a meeting of Israeli and Palestinian parents from the "Forum of Bereaved Families", held in Kalansawa.

They discussed racism, discrimination and prejudice.

This very special project was this year honorably mentioned by the Association of Educators for the Fight Against Racism and anti-Semitism of the Teachers Organization in Israel. ■



Photo by Otman Hatib, "Ibn Sina" school, Kalansawa



## The Historic Exhibition In Progress - Dilemmas And Decisions

Anita Tarsi - curator

When the idea to replace the permanent exhibition at Beit Theresienstadt first came up, we did not realize how hard and challenging this task would be and did not expect the wide spectrum of questions arising, both conceptual and practical. When I was charged to lay out the concept I asked myself in what way the new exhibition should differ from the existing one. How can we renew without downplaying the insights and the force inherent in the existing exhibition? What should we do to preserve the understatement and authenticity of its messages? How can we use the new tools and the accumulated knowledge to display the story of ghetto Theresienstadt in the best possible way? It was difficult to find fitting answers to these questions. The creators of the new



One panel from the new exhibition

exhibition: curator, consultant, researcher, designer, graphic artists, illumination specialist, producer, carpenter and a whole long list of professionals involved in the preparations, we all are of the second or third generation after the Shoah. We are not able to design an exhibition which would bear the authentic, original message like that created by the survivors themselves. Our viewpoint is different, the new exhibition is created and built by those bearing the memory and not by those who experienced the ghetto with their bodies and soul.

In the face of this limitation we made every effort to involve our members of the first generation, especially those active in Beit Theresienstadt, who agreed to invest of their time and energy, checking every document and every panel of the exhibition during their conception. We took care to accept the reactions and insights of our members on all subjects, be it a request regarding the size of the letters, comments for texts or the correct weight given to each topic. The permanent exhibition (planned to remain in place for 10 years at least) is based on a historic orientation, its main mission is to expose the visitor

to the history of ghetto Theresienstadt. During the first stages of laying down the conceptual guidelines we visited a number of exhibitions, including such related to ghetto Theresienstadt. We got an idea of what there is and also what from our viewpoint is not sufficiently stressed. From a Jewish viewpoint we chose to focus the exhibition in four directions which we believed to be of decisive importance. The "experience" of the ghetto by the prisoners; transports to the East; the daily routine of ghetto life and living conditions; the fate of old people and children; the subordination to an unpredictable and hard-to-understand regime of tyranny, suppression and coercion. During the research, while choosing the material, we often found - in letters and postcards written by prisoners - different versions of identical questions: why do I deserve this fate? Why do we have to surrender our apartments? Why do we have to remove our children from their calm

life and go with them to the ghetto? What was our sin? Maybe that the summons to the ghetto is just a mistake? On the level of the individual these questions show the deep gap between the naïve view of the Jewish victims and the essence of the Nazi plans - which at that time were already carried out in the Soviet Union and in some of the camps, where assembly-line mass killings of Jews took place. Reading these letters illustrates the helplessness of those who do not know where they are being taken and why. It is important to make clear to the visitor of the exhibition that all we know today, in hindsight, about the Holocaust and the ghetto is very different from the information known then to the victims, which guided their thoughts and behavior.

The exhibition deals also with the Nazi perpetrator, his aims and considerations regarding the establishment of the ghetto and its place in the mechanism of the "Final Solution". Because of contemporary erroneous conceptions about these topics, we decided to dedicate an important spot in the display to them and to show through documents, testimonies, photographs and art objects the Nazi face of the ghetto, its tasks and history.

The exhibition is based mainly on material from the archives of Beit Theresienstadt - documents, postcards, letters, diaries, newspapers and also on items from our art collection, not shown before, except for short displays - drawings and paintings made by ghetto prisoners. These creations are first-hand testimonies in true time of life in the ghetto with its many variations. The exhibition does not include works created after the war. For obvious reasons the displayed objects will be copies of the original creations. Nevertheless, starting from the opening of the exhibition some original drawings will also be shown for a time.

The exhibition is divided into 11 panels, according to subjects: Jewish fate 1933-1945; Jewish leadership; transports to Theresienstadt; transports to the East; the old, the blind and death; children and youth; everyday life; diseases and humor; art; ghetto Theresienstadt and the "Final Solution". The last panel will display facts about the town Theresienstadt and the Small Fortress and also numerical data about the population of the ghetto during its existence. An additional panel will be erected outside the museum, explaining the credo of the new exhibition and its connection to the exhibition shown at this place during the 30 years since the establishment of Beit Terezin. The exhibition is due to be opened in November 2007, marking 66 years since the establishment of the ghetto. We expect and believe that the new exhibition will last many years and that many thousands will visit it, from Israel and abroad. ■

**We all, members of the second and third generation after the Shoah, are not able to design an exhibition which would bear the authentic, primeval message like that created by the survivors themselves.**

**In the face of this limitation we made every effort to involve our members of the first generation, especially those active in Beit Theresienstadt**



# NEW PERMANENT EXHIBIT AT THE HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF BEIT THERESIENSTADT

## Life In Ghetto Theresienstadt

Dr. Margalit Shlain - academic consultant

From a perspective of more than fifty years, the new permanent exhibition at the Historical Museum tells the story of ghetto Theresienstadt from its establishment on November 24, 1941, until its liberation on May 8, 1945. The historical development of the ghetto is shown from the viewpoint of the Jewish leadership and the Jewish community in the ghetto - and especially their attempts to survive and the creation of a society which tried, even in the midst of destruction, to maintain human values and behavior, in the face of the efficiency and determination of the German extermination machinery during the Holocaust.

The exhibition is based on accumulated scientific research, documentation from the ghetto era and on the numerical updating of the card index of ghetto inmates in Beit Terezin's archives and also on documentation connected to the ghetto, found in various archives throughout the years.

The exhibition displays to the visitor life in the ghetto, supposed to be "a Jewish town" for the Protectorate

**The exhibition is intended to enable the visitor to understand the true reality of life in the ghetto and to refute the many myths regarding the "normal" life in ghetto Theresienstadt, which the German propaganda machine tried to depict**

Jews. In fact - it was a concentration and transit camp for some 158,000 Jews, most of them from Central Europe. The various groups of Jews sent to the ghetto are represented and community life as it developed there is described. This life was influenced both by the character of the ghetto leadership and the views of the Jewish public which saw a central value in education of children and in the attempt to save them, the core of the nation's future.

Through original documents, pictures, paintings, diaries, letters



written by prisoners and other means the exhibition describes the difficult day-to-day life in the ghetto: the insufferable crowding vis-à-vis the transports filling the ghetto again and again, lack of minimal living conditions, lack of privacy, continuous hunger, diseases and the ever-present dread of transports to the East, the central axis of life in the ghetto from January 1941 until the end of October 1944. This factual description is intended to enable the visitor to understand the true reality of life in the ghetto and to refute the many myths regarding the "normal" life in ghetto Theresienstadt, which the German propaganda machine tried to depict. This is a historical-didactical exhibition with a classical museological conception, using up-to-date technological means, without computerized imaging. The visitor may use the computer, searching for information in the archives of the education center, outside the exhibition; computers will also serve as teaching aid in classes.

The exhibition is meant to stimulate an experience, study and critical thought about the kind of dilemmas the ghetto and its Jewish inmates had to face - and also understanding, identification and appreciation of the fate of the Jewish community and its members during the Holocaust. ■

## New Exhibition - A Difficult Task

Mordehai Livni - translator

Our permanent "historical" exhibition served our aims for many years, it did the job, but the time has arrived to renew it. Not so much regarding its content since the facts did not change (though new research and new sources brought new insights and corrections of data unknown or incorrect before) - but rather regarding the form and design of display. When our steering committee decided last year to change the permanent exhibition of Beit Theresienstadt, it was clear that this would entail huge resources and, mainly, much work. In addition to finding the right people for the implementation, the choice of material, the decisions of what to include and what to leave out required investment of much time and thought. The dilemma between the will to display as much as possible of the documents, pictures and exhibits from our collections and the aspiration to create a readily understood exhibition - for high school students and adults, Israelis and visitors from abroad - is not easy. Moreover, there is always the tendency to make the exhibition a kind of mini-seminar on ghetto Theresienstadt and the Holocaust in general and it is hard to stand up to this temptation.

it was decided to accept one of them, created by Shmuel Groag with his two colleagues. The committee felt that this proposition corresponded best with the spirit of Beit Theresienstadt. Maybe that Shmuel's personal relationship to the subject had its influence, too.



In addition to the renewal of the exhibition proper it was found that at this opportunity a number of important technical problems must be solved - illumination, air-conditioning, rain-proofing, safety and acoustics. Let us hope that the solution of these problems will be on a high professional level to safeguard our displays for years to come.

Finally - we cannot yet congratulate ourselves on the outcome, but it is clear that a large and heartfelt "thank you" is due not only to the professionals, specialists and consultants from the outside but also - and especially so - to the team of Beit Theresienstadt. It invested for many months now uncounted hours of work, enormous energies, knowledge and initiative in this worthy undertaking. Maybe that the exhibition, to open shortly, will not be a large one, but it will be ours, in every meaning of the word. ■

The problems of design were solved relatively fast. After receiving a number of propositions from various designers,



RUTH BONDY

## Death of a Painter

Lasst meine Bilder nicht sterben ... Bruchstücke einer Biographie (Don't Let my Pictures Die ... Fragments of a Biography) Amalie Seckbach, author: Gabriele Reber, published by "Memento", Frankfurt, 2006.

Most of the creations of the artist and sculptress Amalie Seckbach were lost in the Holocaust; Beit Terezin has some of the few which survived, thanks to the estate of Trude Groag, nurse at the old people's home in ghetto Theresienstadt, who nursed her and became her friend.

Amalie, nee Buch, was born 1870 in Hungen, Germany; at age 37 she married Max Seckbach, a well-known architect in Frankfurt. She was a collector of ancient

Chinese and Japanese woodcuts and only at a rather high age, after her husband died in 1922, she began to sculpt and paint. Though she was an autodidact, her creations - especially the heads and masks expressing human existential pain - were exhibited in museums and galleries all over Germany and also in Madrid and Paris (together with works by Chagall, Dufy and others).

During the Nazi regime Amalie Seckbach succeeded to smuggle out a small part of her collection to Columbia, where her brother Otto had emigrated. Another part of her collection (as she told to Trude Groag in ghetto Theresienstadt) she buried at her house in Frankfurt, but the house was destroyed in bomb attacks on the city and the pictures were lost. As related by her brother Sally, who was deported to the ghetto together with her and survived, Amalie was brought there on September 15, 1942, she searched near the public kitchens for thrown-away margarine wrappings, dried and straightened them and drew on them. Sometimes she succeeded to sell one of her drawings for food, but she suffered terrible hunger and lost half of her weight. She died in the ghetto of exhaustion on August 10, 1944, - Trude Groag drew her on her death-bed, the drawing is in the archives of Beit Terezin. ■

**She searched near the public kitchens for thrown-away margarine wrappings, dried and straightened them and drew on them. Sometimes she succeeded to sell one of her drawings for food, but she suffered terrible hunger**

## Women in the Holocaust

**Ktamim shel or - lihiot isha bashoa (Spots of Light - to be a Woman in the Holocaust)** is more than a catalog accompanying the exhibition bearing this title which opened in April 2007 at Yad Vashem. It is a book in its own right, about attempts of Jewish women in the Shoah to save their children, to give aid to others and to preserve their spirit.

The book (200 pages, written and edited by Judith Inbar, curator of the exhibition) is divided, like the exhibition: love, motherhood, care for others, femininity, underground and partisans, day-to-day life, friendship, belief, food and creativity. Each of the chapters is focused on the personal story of three or four girls or women, with their pictures, writings, creations and deeds - a moving testimony to resourcefulness at a difficult time while remaining a human being.

The stories of a number of the personae in the catalog are connected to ghetto Theresienstadt: a fragment from the diary of Tamar Herman, nicknamed Šňupka, after her beloved was deported in September 1944 to the East; **Frau Röttchen**, a poem by Trude Groag about a dying patient at the old people's hospital in the ghetto; a drawing by the physician Dr. Anna

## Medicine in the Holocaust

Refuah v'Shoah (Medicine and Holocaust), a collection of articles from the journal Harefuah (Medicine) in the years 1946 - 2005, was published by the Israeli Medical Association in the beginning of 2007, thanks to the efforts of Dr. Tomi Spencer, who died on July 2, 2006 - before the book came out.

Dr. Spencer, physician, painter, musician, man of books, teacher and researcher, was one of the initiators of teaching Holocaust medicine in the framework of the Faculty of Medicine at the

Haifa Technion and there he also created in 2001, in cooperation with Beit Theresienstadt, an exhibition titled **Art and Medicine in Ghetto Theresienstadt**.

He was the son of Hugo Sonnenschein, who used the pen name "Sonka", born in Kyjov, Moravia, poet and revolutionary, who succeeded to survive Auschwitz but died in 1953, aged 63, as a prisoner of the Communist regime of

Czechoslovakia, at Mirov prison. Tomi, born 1927, and his brother were sent by their parents just in time with a "Kindertransport" from Prague to England and so they survived. In 1966 Dr. Spencer and his family immigrated to Israel; for many years he was a general practitioner at kibbutz Sassa and other communities in Galilee.

The articles in the collection deal with Nazi medicine during the Holocaust, on subjects like euthanasia and "research" carried out by Nazi physicians in concentration camps and also with the activities of Jewish physicians in ghettos and their research, specifically on hunger diseases. Some of the articles deal with incidents of disease among Holocaust survivors in Israel and also with the influence of terror attacks on the survivors.

On May 8, 2007, the seventh meeting for incidence of diseases and medicine in the Holocaust was held at the Western Galilee Hospital in Nahariya. Dr. Arie Goldstein gave a lecture on **Health Care, Incidence of Diseases and Mortality in Ghetto Terezin Compared to Other Ghettos** and Ruth Bondy talked about

**Life in Filth**, the struggle of prisoners, engineers and physicians in ghetto Terezin against filth and parasites. The meetings on medicine and Holocaust were initiated by professor Shaul M. Shasha, director of the hospital, whose articles about incidence of diseases and medicine in concentration camps in the Third Reich are included in the book **Refuah v'Shoah**. ■

Pick and a drawing of Katherina Frank dancing Flamenco - a dance which saved her and her little son's lives.

The catalog also contains scenes by Naava Shan, then Vlasta Šchönova, from theater performances in the ghetto; a chapter dedicated to Regina Jonas, the first accredited woman rabbi in Berlin and her lectures in the ghetto; the recipes noted by Malka Zimmet in Terezin; an essay by Eli Cohen about Nazi forms he found at Lansing camp; fragments from the diary of Alisa Shek, then Alice Ehrmann, that starts when the transports of October 1944 left the ghetto and was written in German with Hebrew letters and also a letter written by Elly Kulka to her husband, as she went to the gas chamber during the liquidation of the Birkenau family camp in July 1944. ■



## Searching for Father

Eugen Drexler from the Slovak village Spacince was a grain merchant and thanks to this profession he, his wife Helen and their small son Palo were not included in the great wave of transports, with which Slovak Jews were deported to Auschwitz in 1942.

After Slovakia was occupied by the German army in August 1944, the family tried to hide with farmers in the vicinity, but they were caught and sent to the Sereď transit camp. There the six-years old Palo saw his father for the last time. In December 1944 he was sent with his mother to Auschwitz, but since the extermination machinery was stopped with the approach of the Soviet army, they were sent on to ghetto Theresienstadt. Palo (Pavol, Pavel and now Paul) was separated from his mother and attached to a group of children in the home L-417, largely empty after the huge wave of transports to Auschwitz in the fall of 1944. As he writes in his memoirs **In Search of My Father**, published in Sidney, Australia, he was not able to eat the ghetto food, fell sick and weakened, his mother was allowed to take him to live with her at the Hamburg barracks.

Because she worked in agriculture she sometimes succeeded to filch an egg or a potato for her son and when she did not succeed she gave him some of her own bread ration. After liberation both - together with the two grandmothers who

**Helen waited impatiently at the Bratislava train station for her husband to return, holding a sign with his name and there she learned from one of the returning prisoners that he was killed in a bombardment on May 3, 1945, in the Lübeck bay**

also were in Theresienstadt - returned to Slovakia, but Helen's mother died on the way and was buried in Kolin. Helen waited impatiently at the Bratislava train station for her husband to return, holding a sign with his name and there she learned from one of the returning prisoners that he was killed in a bombardment on May 3, 1945, in the Lübeck bay.

Helen Drexler emigrated in the footsteps of her sister and brother-in-law to Sidney. For many years she worked at two jobs to be able to return the 150 Pound Sterling, Helen's and Paul's fare to Australia. Paul grew up in boarding schools, at a young age he started working as a subaltern clerk in an insurance company, rose in the ranks until - in 1978 - he opened his own auditor's office.

Only in the 1990ies he felt the need to return to his past and traveled with his wife Diana and their two daughters to Slovakia and Terezin; in May 2004 he went to the area of Lübeck where he learned details about his father's death. As the prisoners were evacuated from Neuengamme concentration camp and its branch camps, a large part of them were taken to Lübeck bay and had to board three ships. But instead of sinking them, which the SS authorities had originally intended, they spread false information that on these ships are soldiers of the German army. Consequently, the RAF bombed the ships on the last day of the battle and most of the prisoners on board were killed - one day before the Wehrmacht surrendered to the British army. ■



## Diaries by Mother and Daughter

A žbudu velká, napíšu román (When I grow up I will write a novel), the book by Alena Ludvíková, published by GplusG in Prague, 2006, is a combination of two diaries - one written by the authoress (born 1931), after her mother was deported in January 1944 to ghetto Terezin, and the diary written by the mother in the ghetto; the latter is accompanied by Alena's explanations 'how it really was'. Alena found the four notebooks from ghetto Terezin only after her mother's death. Alena was the daughter of a Czech Catholic father and a Jewish mother, but the father left the house and remarried when she was 3 years old; the mother was her whole world. Both diaries reflect the pain of leave-taking, the strong yearning - and more than that, the spiritual confusion of the victims of the race laws, who up to the occupation did not live as Jews.

Alena grew up a Catholic. The mother Růžena nee Porges longed in the ghetto for her daughter, mainly on Xmas and



Easter and she went to look at the altar decorated with flowers which the Catholics had in the ghetto. Růžena, born 1906, was lucky; in the ghetto she had a Jewish friend, Marek, who took care of her and also because she

**Both diaries reflect the pain of leave-taking, the strong yearning - and more than that, the spiritual confusion of the victims of the race laws, who up to the occupation did not live as Jews**

was a professional hat-maker. The "Freizeitgestaltung" (department for leisure-time activities) called on her to make hats for various performances. That also enabled her to see many cultural events, among them Fireflies produced by Vlasta Schöňová (Naava Shan), a performance that moved Růžena to tears because of its true Czech spirit. After returning to Prague in May 1945 the mother had a dilemma - to marry Pepa, her Czech friend from before the deportation or the Jewish Marek. Alena was the one to decide: it is better to marry Pepa since in case that Jews would be persecuted again, the mother would be secure, with an "Aryan" husband. ■

**Ein Engel war nicht dort - Ein Leben wider den Schatten in Auschwitz (There was no angel there - a life against the shadow in Auschwitz)** by Grete Salus (1910 - 1992) was re-published by "Forum" in Leipzig. The memoirs by Grete Salus, who went through ghetto Terezin, Auschwitz and Oederan camp was printed for the first time in Germany in 1958 and another edition in 1981. ■

**Kratičky (Short poems)**, a book written by Edna Amit, Mihmoret, was published in April 2007 in a bilingual edition (Hebrew and Czech), with the support of the city Prostějov in the Czech Republic. The title page of the book bears a drawing of a boat on the background of the night sky, drawn by Edna, then Lilka Bobasch, at the girl's home L-410 in ghetto Terezin, guided by the artist Friedl Dicker-Brandeis. ■





## German-Israeli Discussion on the Subject of Anti-Semitism - as Seen by a Member of the Third Generation

Tally Cohen



Robert Řehák, Czech Cultural Attaché

On May 9, 2007, a study day was held at Beit Theresienstadt in cooperation with the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung on the subject "anti-Semitism and Identity in Israel and in Europe". Guests from Germany and members of our association from various generations participated in the meeting. Many questions came up (some of them quite difficult and with no answer) and also many subjects for future discussions.

One interesting point which cropped up throughout the day - from the opening address of the Czech cultural attaché Mr. Robert Řehák up to the closing remarks was "talk vis-à-vis action" - it was said that in the past, for long years, anti-Semitism was expressed mainly through words. Silence and disregard led finally to the absolutely worst expression of anti-Semitism in history - the attempt for systematic extermination of the Jewish people. And so, even today, we witness verbal anti-Semitism like the words of the Iranian leader Mahmoud Ahmadinejad that the Holocaust never happened and that Israel has no right to exist. The question is, when will these words be replaced by deeds.

subject raised was anti-Semitism as against anti-Israelism. We know that "classical" anti-Semitism, fomented by the church since its very beginnings, which brought about torture by the Inquisition, blood libel and cruelty of the crusades, did not disappear. It is there, more or less hidden. The "Jewish" image from the anti-Semitic caricatures still lingers on in the view of many Europeans. Though, in the last years we see a new kind of anti-Semitism: anti-Israelism.

Anti-Israelism is expressed mainly by extreme Islamic streams but also by leftist, pro-Palestinian European movements. This is in fact a combination of the old anti-Semitism with taking sides in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. At this stage Mr. Hermann Bünz from the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung asked a fundamental question: why does the State of Israel need repeated confirmation of its right to exist, by the nations

of the world? The state already got this right and it exists. Has that an influence on the national identity? In my mind, and this also emerged during the discussion, the answer is that our right to this country is not yet a matter of course. We are a young state, living still under existential threats, and like a child, constantly in need of positive encouragement, the State of Israel also needs such perpetual encouragement. From this point on, the discussion went over to the question of personal identity. How do I define myself? Human being? Jew? Christian? German/Israeli? Global person? Here one could

**The discussion went over to the question of personal identity. How do I define myself? Human being? Jew? Christian? German/Israeli? Here one could see significant differences between the Europeans and the Israelis**

see significant differences between the Europeans and the Israelis. Whereas the Germans almost attempt to escape from a national-German identity, the vast majority of Israelis said that their national identity is an inseparable part of their being. The

question of religious identity was more complicated and problematic and because of lack of time not much was said



Hermann Bünz, Director, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung

about it. I gained very much from this discussion and in the main, I took away with me much food for thought. This was an opportunity to listen to various people and viewpoints, also of people who did not grow up here, and to get a different perspective on subjects touching each of us.

From here I want to call out to all members of the younger generations to take part in future study days - this call is for you, because each of us is concerned in various ways with questions of identity and self-definition. ■

## Activities of the Third Generation

Anita Tarsi

Members of the third generation interested to join activities at Beit Theresienstadt are invited to give their opinion on a new project. It is based on an exciting dialog between members of the third generation in Israel and people of their age group in Europe. In reality this works in two frameworks. The one takes place in Israel, in cooperation with the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. In this framework there is an attention dialog, opened with a discussion on anti-Semitism and its influence on Israeli and European identities. The meeting was held at Beit Theresienstadt on May 9, 2007.

In the second there were until now two reciprocal meetings of groups of young people from Israel and Germany. In May 2006 the groups met in Israel and in October 2006 in the Czech Republic. A further meeting is planned for the coming October, this time in Germany. Visits to memorial sites in various places are planned and also discussions on questions arising from the role of the third generation in Holocaust commemoration and in the fight against anti-Semitism and racism. Members of the third generation interested in this activity are invited to contact Beit Theresienstadt, as early as possible. The project is supported by the German foundation "Future and Memory" that furthers projects of dialogs of youth and students for peace in Europe and the world over. ■



## TWO SILVER RINGS

Anita Tarsi

Since ancient times the ring, more than any other accessory or jewelry, bears feelings and messages, of the basics of human existence. There is nothing like a ring to express authority, power and honor, ownership, love and esteem, tradition and memory. Over time, for years and generations, from father to son, from mother to daughter, from man to his beloved, there is nothing like this piece of precious metal, surviving the ravages of time, to engrave in it and to preserve the deepest feelings and the highest hopes.

In a place where a ring is fashioned, be it a place of hunger, distress and death, hope and faith are fashioned into it, too. Giving a ring is a declaration of belief in life and its continuation, confidence in man and his spirit, hope for the light which will break forth at the end of despair and darkness.

### Henry Sussmann's Story: A Ring - Birthday Gift in the Ghetto

Heinz (Henry) Sussmann was 13 years old when he was deported from Vienna, his birth town, to Theresienstadt; this was toward the end of 1943, together with his older sister Lizi and their father David. In his memoirs from the ghetto is the fixed picture of the first shower - seemingly an everyday and banal event, but not for the young Heinz, because this first shower he experienced not less than one and a half years after he arrived in the ghetto. The water was cold and he got a cube of strange, brown-colored material for soap. Among those in the shower was also his father and Henry remarks that this was the first time he saw his father naked.

After the shower the bathers were sprayed with disinfectant powder, to kill lice and bedbugs on the prisoner's bodies, causing diseases and epidemics. Henry remembers the shower as a point of light, a moment of grace in the tedious and painful routine of ghetto life.

Heinz worked at the carpentry workshop and he remembers a German order to manufacture hermetic doors and to install them at the ends of one of the town's moats. It was said that this was part of a plan to build hermetically closed chambers for killings by gas. A further sign of the existence of the plan to liquidate the ghetto Henry sees in his transfer, in October 1944, from the carpentry to a group of masons who carried out building work in the area of the town walls. Henry remembers that Karl Rahm, the Nazi ghetto commander, supervised the selection of workers personally. It seems that the Germans attached great importance to this operation.

Among other tasks the group had to erect a huge square wooden barracks, with no openings but for one hermetic door.

For Heinz's fourteenth birthday, his first birthday inside the ghetto walls, his father gave him a silver ring with the engraved emblem of the town Theresienstadt.



**For his first birthday inside the ghetto walls, his father gave him a silver ring with the engraved emblem of the town Theresienstadt. Where did his father get the precious metal? What did he have to sacrifice for it?**

(The emblem of the fortress town before it became a ghetto). Where did his father get the precious metal? What did he have to sacrifice for it? How did he find in the ghetto the artisan/jeweler who created the ring

and how did he remunerate him for his work? Henry asks and does not know the answer. His father wanted to express his love, he says, his feelings and his worries, like at all the previous birthdays, maybe even more, because of the hardships, in spite of the hardships. Small presents and greeting cards for friends and family members towards events and special days were quite common in the ghetto. Henry kept the ring for many years as a testimony and keepsake. A short time ago he transferred it from his home in Rehovot to the archives of Beit Terezin for safekeeping. There it will continue to fulfill its destiny, to preserve his father's love, the memory and man's spirit against all odds. ■

### Ben Zion Moskovic's Story: The Ring with the Family History

The late rabbi and cantor Ben Zion Moskovic and his family left Bratislava in 1938 and went to Amsterdam in the hope to distance themselves from the threatening war.

In 1942 Ben Zion was sent to Westerbork and later to Buchenwald. His wife Frieda, the children Uriel and Noemi and the baby Haya Nehama, just born, remained in Amsterdam. In September 1943 Frieda and the children were also sent to Westerbork.

**On the sides of the ring he engraved a summary of what happened to him under the Nazis: from his home in Amsterdam to Westerbork, from there to Buchenwald and finally to Theresienstadt. On the top part of the ring he engraved the names of the members of his family**



exchange in 1944, when Ben Zion was in Buchenwald and his family in Ravensbrueck. There were also notes the rabbi wrote in the camps, among them fragments of poems and prayers with which he consoled his co-prisoners.

In April 1945 Ben Zion Moskovic arrived with his last strength in Theresienstadt, in a "death march" from Buchenwald. At that time he already had no contact to his family, for a long time, and did not know its fate. Through his cousin, an "old prisoner" who worked in the kitchen, he got a silver spoon and with his last



## NEW IN OUR ARCHIVES

strength he made it into a beautiful ring - among his other occupations he was also a professional jeweler. On the sides of the ring he engraved a summary of what happened to him under the Nazis: from his home in Amsterdam to Westerbork, from there to Buchenwald and finally to Theresienstadt. On the top part of the ring he engraved the names of the members of his family, framed like the Tables of the Covenant.

In June 1945 the members of the family met again - in Eindhoven, Netherland. The daughter Noemi Friedmann, nee Moskovic, who lives in Netanya, donated a copy of the ring to the archives of Beit Theresienstadt.

We are deeply indebted to the two donors for these important additions to our archives. ■



## COMMEMORATION AND REMEMBRANCE

### WONDERFUL STORY

Aviva Bar-On

**Haim Permont**, professor at the Music Academy, composed four songs from a selection of poems written in ghetto Theresienstadt by children and youth, of whom most perished in the Holocaust. The collection which includes poems and drawings was published in the book "There Are No Butterflies Here", translated into Hebrew by the poetess Leah Goldberg.

Haim Permont's work "Leaden Skies" - a series of songs for choir, soloists and orchestra, was performed on Holocaust day at the Culture Hall of Rishon LeZion by the "Adi" choir, the choir of the Ihud, the singer Edna Prochnik and the Rishon LeZion orchestra, under the baton of Dan Ettinger. For many years now I sing in a choir conducted by Yishai Steckler, who is also the conductor of the "Adi" choir. After I told Yishai that I was for three years in ghetto Theresienstadt, he asked me to come to a rehearsal of the "Adi" choir and to relate my story. That was the first time I talked about my Theresienstadt experience in front of an audience and I was very excited.

Two of the songs set to music by Haim Permont appear in the book "There Are No Butterflies Here" as written by unknown children. All excited, I phoned my friend Anna Hanusova (Flaška) who lives in Brno and I found that

these anonymous poems were written by her brother Michael Flach, professor for International Relations in the US, who today lives with his sister in Brno. When I learned this, the program for the premiere performance at the concert hall of Rishon LeZion was already printed and the mistake could not be corrected, but at the concert's opening the conductor Dan Ettinger related the true story which only now was found out.

**All excited, I phoned my friend Anna Hanusova (Flaška) who lives in Brno and I found that these anonymous poems were written by her brother Michael Flach**

The work "Leaden Skies" is very impressive, it expresses the atmosphere of distress and despair we felt in the ghetto - it is very moving. The execution by the orchestra, the choirs and the soloists is outstanding and the critique (in the newspaper "Haaretz") also praised it highly. For me it was an unforgettable experience. ■

### Meeting of Genealogical Group at Beit Theresienstadt

Mordechai Livni

**Many of the participants welcomed the opportunity to use the data base of Beit Theresienstadt to extract details about members of their families. Most of the researchers left with new information**

**O**n Friday, April 27, 2007, a group of genealogists from the Israeli Genealogical Society held their second annual meeting at Beit Theresienstadt. It was the SIG (Special Interest Group) Austria-Czechoslovakia which deals with the fate of families from this general area.

After a guided tour through the exhibition Drawing on Pages of Time, 1942 - 1945, with art created by members of the Groag family, there was a lecture on the subject Dilemmas of the Jewish Leadership in Ghetto Theresienstadt. This was followed by a lively discussion in which the participants posed questions about the tragic situation of the Jewish Elders and the Jewish leadership, as they attempted to save Jews - against all odds.

Many of the participants welcomed the opportunity to use the data base of Beit Theresienstadt to extract details about members of their families. Alisah Schiller did the research and

most of the researchers left with new information. Others only started their inquiries and continue their contacts with Alisah.

A report about the meeting, written by one of the participants of the SIG meeting, states that here it was possible to get certificates about the death of people who perished in the ghetto in the years 1941-1945; this is, of course, very important for researchers/genealogists. In his report he details the information present in the data base, e. g. place and date of birth, last address before the ghetto, address in the ghetto etc. He also relates that not all details are known in all cases. The report also mentions that the data base contains also much information about survivors.

A nominal payment is collected for a printout from Beit Theresienstadt's data base. ■



## ALISA SHEK HAS LEFT US

Not long ago we lost our dear long-time friend and colleague Alisa Shek, who was one of the pillars of Beit Terezin. We remember tens of years of working side by side with Alisa, of exchanging views and opinions. We miss greatly her cultural wealth, her knowledge and wide acquaintance with the history of the ghetto and her expertise on the subject of arts and documents - and more than anything else we miss her special personality, her fine humor, her human understanding which needed only few words, her friendship and personal dedication - all these in exact doses, not overdoing it, ever. Her departure is hard to bear.

## Membership Dues for 2007

### Annual membership dues:

● **In Israel: NIS 120.- per person, NIS 180.- per family**

● **Abroad: US\$ 60.- per person, US\$ 90.- per family**

**Payments may be made to Beit Terezin in the following ways -**

- cash - check made out to "Beit Theresienstadt", at Givat Hayim-Ihud, mobile post Emek Hefer 38935, Israel
- bank transfer to the account of our association:  
Bank Leumi LeIsrael - 10  
Branch Herzlia Pituah - 958 (Address: 38 Wingate str,  
46752, Herzlia Pituah, Israel  
IBAN: ILO1095801181045; SWIFT: LUMIILITXXX  
Account no. - 011810/25

After the transfer, please inform Beit Theresienstadt to enable us to credit you accordingly!

- By credit card (for the time being only VISA)  
Phone Beit Terezin - \*\*972-4-6369515. The receipt will be sent by return mail.

In the USA tax deductible contributions can be made via P.E.F. (Israel Endowments Funds, Inc.) using Beit Theresienstadt's code # 2210 with a request that the contribution should be directed to Beit Theresienstadt. Checks should be made out to P.E.F., the address is: P.E.F. 317 Madison Avenue, Suite 607, New York, NY 10017, Tel: (212) 599-1260 Fax: (212) 599-5981. E mail: pefisrael@aol.com

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO BEIT THERESIENSTADT

### Contributions for special projects and for the establishment of the "Perpetual Fund" for Beit Theresienstadt

We ask our members and friends who are interested and willing to contribute for special education projects and for the renovation of the permanent exhibition in our historical museum. A further objective is the establishment of a perpetual fund for Beit Theresienstadt; this fund will guarantee stability and a more secure economic horizon in the coming years.



**THERESIENSTADT MARTYRS REMEMBRANCE ASSOCIATION**

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