

No. 42 January 1997

ACTIVITIES AT BEIT THERESIENSTADT

Generations

The main subject of the discussions of various bodies of our association is the continuing existence and the future functioning of Beit Terezin. At meetings of the enlarged steering committee, in broader frameworks and in talks with members of the second generation, various ideas were proposed during the last half year to ensure - also from the financial viewpoint - the future of Beit Th. The majority apparently believes that kibbutz Givat Hayim-Ihud, on whose grounds B. Th. stands, should play a more active role in our activities. Our chairman M. Livni, together with Willy Groag, Amram Haisraeli and other members, met a few times with the secretary and other functionaries of the kibbutz in this matter. In mid-January another meeting is planned.

Bilha Rubin, a member of Givat Hayim-Ihud, started to work at Beit Terezin (for a trial period of half a year). Bilha, who has experience with pedagogic and organizational work, is relieving Alisah Schiller of some of her work and at the same time her cooperation is expressing the involvement of the kibbutz members and of the second generation.

Members of the second generation are in favour of introducing changes in the day-to-day work of Beit Theresienstadt by replacing the voluntary work of our founding members through the hiring of paid employees. Eli Loewenthal proposed that the house should be managed by an outside body, which would make it a profitable institution. At meetings of the second generation reproaches were voiced about insufficient cooperation by the older members and also, that decisions were not always taken in an appropriate manner. The sometimes emotional discussions among the representatives of the two generations are indicative of the seriousness with which we all approach these questions.

At a meeting of the broader steering committee on Dec. 3. 1996, M. Livni reported that the kibbutz is going to vacate the "Edelstein" room in Beit Terezin within a few months. Since the erection of the house, this room was at the disposition of the kibbutz. Now we will be able to finally create an exhibition room for pictures of our collection.

Return

The exhibition "Theresienstadt: Culture and Barbarism" from our collections, which was shown in Sweden, Norway and in the museum at the old castle Koldinghus in Denmark, closed on August 4, 1996. The 160 artifacts returned to Beit Theresienstadt.

During the exhibition last year in Lund, Sweden, Leo Kramar (who lives there) viewed it. Among the exhibited pictures he identified one ("Opera Costume"), which was made in 1944 in ghetto Th. by his father, the architect Leo Mayer. Leo Kramar was not in Terezin, but during the war years he was able to maintain contact with his father - until the latter was deported in the autumn of 1944 to Auschwitz. After the war Leo K. emigrated to Sweden and since then the connection with his father's family and with the Jewish community was severed. In our last issue he published a request for information about his relatives in Israel and in this way he found his uncle, a younger brother of his father. This uncle is now 90 years old and lives in Herzlia. It so happens that the uncle is a painter too. In November 1996, Leo Kramar visited Israel and Beit Terezin for the first time.

Appreciation

A modest Hanukka party was held on Dec. 10, 1996 at Beit Terezin for all the members of our association, who are volunteering in its activities - those who relate their memorable recollections to students, who work on translations and take part in our other activities. In the presence of three generations, the volunteers received a scroll of appreciation. The ability to recall and retell the experiences of those horrible times and the strength of spirit needed to do so were especially mentioned. The manager of our educational center Anita Tarsi and Bilha Rubin, who moderated the ceremony, read from letters by students, who reacted to their study-days at Beit Theresienstadt. All of them stress the importance and the impact of a survivor's personal testimony. Some of the students wrote that their grandparents, who had survived the Holocaust, never talked about those times. The evening came to a close with discussions among the members of the three generations. The Hanukka songs were accompanied by Shmuel (Jirka) Bloch - accordion and by Jossi Kafri, Givat Hayim Ihud - guitar.

### THE EDUCATIONAL CENTER (JULY - DECEMBER 1996)

#### Study-Days

In 1996 we held 80 study-days for students of grades 8 - 12, teachers and educators and also for groups of adults from Germany and from the Czech Republic. This activity of ours has by now become routine and so we can develop further educational projects

#### Computer-aided Learning

"Youth in the ghetto" is a new project of the educational center with the participation of members of the second generation. The idea is to develop a computer-aided educational framework, based on essays, poems and newspapers created by children and youth in the ghetto. At this stage we deal with the value-related problems of youth and their educators in the confrontation between the educational tendency to impart basic values, honesty and straightforwardness and the surrounding frustration, hunger and shortages.

#### Symposium "Education and Holocaust" at Yad Vashem

In October 1996, an international meeting was held at Yad Vashem on this subject. Some 350 teachers and researchers from Israel and abroad took part. The first and the third of the three conference days were dedicated to lectures by leading scientists.

On the second day, curricula dealing with the Holocaust and developed by various institutes were demonstrated. Our educational center showed an exhibit explaining our work. It included a film prepared by our association, a multimedia program about children's homes in ghetto Terezin and a new workshop for students dealing with the dilemma of the Jewish ghetto leaders, using documents and also video interviews recorded by us.

#### Internet

Beit Terezin has a site in the Internet, which by now includes a few pages (Hebrew and English) as a general introduction. In the near future we will add more information about our archives and art collection. The address is:

<http://www.cet.ac.il/terezin>

*(By Anita Tarsi)*

### ACTUALITIES

#### "Terezinska Inicijativa"

On Nov. 14, 1996, the annual meeting of the organisation of the former Terezin ghetto prisoners in the Czech Republic "Terezinska Iniciativa" took place. The chairman Hanus Schimmerling spoke to the more than 200 participants and said that the time has arrived to change the operation of the organization and to replace the volunteers of the first generation by paid professionals. "Terezinska Iniciativa" is luckily in a good financial position - its income in 1996 was by far more than the outlay. Miroslav Karny reported on the activity of the international fund of the organisation and he also informed the meeting that in the near future a further volume of the memorial book will be published, which will include the 42,000 names of German Jews who were in Theresienstadt. A part of the former "Magdeburg" barracks was handed over to the Memorial and will be opened during the next year for educational work, conferences and exhibitions. The concept for the new design of the Terezin ghetto museum was approved. Now a tender will be published for the execution, which is due to be ready by the year 2000.

### Award

On Nov. 22, 1996, Ruth Bondy received from Yad Vashem the Memorial Prize of the Jacob Buchmann fund in appreciation of her life's work on the subject of the Holocaust. In their decision, the judges - Prof. Yehuda Bauer, Prof. Israel Guttmann, Prof. Leni Yahil and the director of Yad Vashem Avner Shalev - mentioned Ruth Bondy's biographical book about the first Theresienstadt elder of the Jews J. Edelstein, Gonda Redlich's diary which was edited by her, the translation and preparation for print of the children's newspaper "Kamarad" from the ghetto (to be published in the near future in Hebrew) and her activity within the framework of Beit Theresienstadt. Ruth Bondy said in her acceptance speech that she actually came to deal with the Holocaust against her will, because of the distorted relationship towards Holocaust victims. She reiterated that she could not find any moral in the Holocaust. Concluding, she thanked her friends at Beit Terezin who, together with her, fight against forgetfulness, ignorance and falsification of history.

### 155 Years after the Establishment of the Ghetto

in Theresienstadt - Terezin an international meeting was held there on Nov.19, 20, 21, 1996. It was organised by "Pamatnik Terezin" and "Terezinska Iniciativa". The main subjects were the various points of view of the resistance in the ghetto: political, educational and moral. Based on an analysis of nearly 600 testimonies of survivors in the Czech Republic, Anna Lorencova found that 48% of them somehow resisted the Nazi regime: they were members of political underground movements before their deportation, helped with illegal border crossings, did not wear the yellow star, did not register as Jews as required, escaped from the ghetto or from other camps, enlisted in allied armies or taught illegally.

Ludomir Kocourek dealt with a subject which until now was almost never researched: the fate of some 2500 Jews who stayed in the Sudeten area, after it was annexed in 1938 by the German Reich. After their majority were deported in 1943 to ghetto Theresienstadt, the Jewish question in the Sudeten area became somehow unimportant - in official reports from Usti n/L. (Aussig) the subject is mentioned rarely.

Dr. Vojtech Blodig spoke about the discussions leading to the establishment of the ghetto: before the final decision regarding Terezin was made, the Nazi administration considered other places, e.g., Ivancice and Kyjov in Moravia and mainly the ancient Hussite town of Tabor, to humiliate the Czechs.

Out of 700 escape attempts from ghetto Theresienstadt, the majority occurred in the last few weeks before the liberation. Only 36 escaped during the first years. These interesting numbers were included in Miroslav Karny's lecture on the historiography of ghetto resistance. In the nature of it, documentation regarding this subject is very sporadic and much more research is necessary. To broaden the framework, Ruth Bondy spoke about "Humour as a Weapon".

### Another Theresienstadt

The controversial theme of this play can already be perceived from its name "Sladky Theresienstadt" (Sweet Theresienstadt). The play is based on parts of the diary of Willy Mahler who was Block-elder in

B-IV and also on the story of the Nazi propaganda film by Kurt Geron. To make it quite clear, that the story is not based on reality, but on inspiration, the author Arnost Goldflam (actor, director and playwright) changed the names and called them Mahner and Gerroldt. In Mahler's diary there is much about cultural life in the ghetto and about transports leaving - but his many affairs with women seemed to A. Goldflam more interesting. There were some powerful scenes, excellent acting and impressive stage sets (an iron gate symbolizes the entrance to the paradise of memories, but also to the hell of death - where both Geron and Mahler found their end). Former ghetto prisoners - even knowing that the play was not meant for them - had the feeling that they must have been in another ghetto. Only the program in the form of a newspaper with articles by Dr. Miroslav Kryl on Mahler's diary and by Dr. Karel Margry on the Nazi film reminded the audience of the facts. The play was performed (8 times) in November 1996 in the Prague "Archa" theater.

#### About the Author of "I Have Not Seen a Butterfly Around Here"

Pavel Friedmann - a pupil of the Jirasek school in the Resselstreet in Prague (graduating class 1939-40) - was the author of the poem "I Have Not Seen a Butterfly Around Here". It became a symbol of the children of Theresienstadt. His classmates (now 75 years old) invited Ruth Bondy to their annual meeting on Nov. 14, 1996. They asked her to tell them about Pavel in the "El Al" Youth Movement, his agricultural training and the time in the ghetto. They recounted that Pavel was known already in school as a writer and also gave a few of his works from the graduating album to our archives. There is also a caricature of Pavel and a group photograph, where he can be seen with his characteristic mop of hair.

#### CHILDREN'S DRAWINGS FROM TEREZIN

The "Initiative Hans Krasa" in Hamburg, an association involved mainly with the publication of music created in Terezin, held an exhibition of children's drawings from the ghetto at the Hamburg-Ottensen church (July 24 - 31, 1996). There were also woodcuts by the Czech artist Helga Weissova-Hoskova, a former prisoner in ghetto Terezin. The exhibition closed with a recital of the "Pegasus" quartet, rendering works for strings by Hans Krasa and Karel Reiner, both composers in ghetto Th. Helene Schneidermann sang "Ich wart an dem Tor" (I am waiting at the gate) - a potpourri of children's songs from ghetto Theresienstadt by Berno Wilczek.

An exhibition of children's drawings from ghetto Th. was held at the gallery Pabellon-Cuba in the center of Havana, Cuba (Oct. 31 - Nov. 30, 1996). The exhibition was transferred to Pinar del Rio in Western Mexico and will be shown in the beginning of 1997 in several South American cities. The exhibition is on loan from the Prague Jewish Museum and includes 100 drawings by children aged 8-12, from the years 1942-44.

#### 90 Years of Jewish Museum

After 4 years of repairs of the walls of the Pinkas synagogue in Prague, where the names of the 77,000 Jewish victims from Bohemia and Moravia are inscribed, the memorial site was reopened to the public in April 1996. The Jewish Museum in Prague celebrated the 90th anniversary since its founding and the 50th anniversary since its reopening after WWII with several events. An exhibition illustrated its history, a memorial coin with the portrait of the museum's founder Prof. Samuel Hugo Lieben was issued; another exhibition was dedicated to parokhot and torah cloths from the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, out of the enormous collection of more than 2000 parokhot and 4000 torah cloths and other textiles. In the renovated Klaus synagogue, a permanent exhibition of Jewish tradition and customs was opened. The museum - under the direction of Dr. Leo Pavlat - opened this year also an educational and cultural center, planned to serve mainly young people.

#### Educational Work at Memorial Sites

was the subject of study-days (Oct. 10 - 13, 1996) in Rissen near Hamburg, Germany, organized by the Friedrich Ebert foundation in cooperation with "Topographie des Terrors" and with the memorial site Neuengamme. Under discussion were the use of multimedia, teaching methods and means of actualization. Women, brought from Terezin through Auschwitz for clearing work to Hamburg, were

imprisoned at Neuengamme. The Memorial Site has been fighting town hall for many years for the use of the prison building, erected in the area of the former concentration camp in 1948.

### REQUIEM FOR RAFAEL SCHAECHTER

A memorial concert for the composers and musicians, who were deported on Oct. 16, 1944 to Auschwitz, was held in the cathedral of Litomerice near Terezin on Nov. 16, 1996. Solists, the Chamber Choir from Prague and the Choir of the Czech Radio played Dvorak's requiem under the baton of Martin Turnovsky. The concert was organized by the "Hans Krasa Foundation - Terezin".

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The "Hans Krasa Foundation - Terezin" got the use of the basement of the former children's home L-410 from the Terezin municipality. On Sept. 7, 1997, a permanent exhibition in the memory of the conductor Rafael Schaechter will be opened there. At the opening, Verdi's Requiem will be played, which Schaechter had conducted in the ghetto.

Friends of Rafael Schaechter from Terezin or those who participated in his concerts or knew him from Prague and who are ready to share their memories, so that these could be included in the exhibition, are requested to contact: Katya Manor, 21 Kore Hadorot, 93387 Jerusalem, Phone: 02-6722026

### The Terezin Music Memorial Project

The chief recent accomplishment of the TMMP, already mentioned in our issue No. 41 of July 1996, was the release in August of volume III in the Terezin Music Anthology, devoted to works by Hans Krasa. This CD (KOCH International Classics 3-7151-2II1) contains Krasa's "Anna's Song" from the incidental music to Adolf Hoffmeister's "Mladi ve hre" (Youth in the Game, 1935), "Theme and Variations" (1935/42) for string quartet, based on "Anna's Song", "Three Songs" (1943), on poems by Arthur Rimbaud in Vitezslav Nezval's Czech translation, for baritone, clarinet, viola and cello, "Dance" (1943) and "Passacaglia and Fugue" (1944), both for string trio, "Overture" (1943) for 13 instruments and "Brundibar" (1938). "Overture" is here recorded for the first time (it had its world premiere at Yad Vashem in June 1993), as is the Terezin version of "Brundibar". Czech performing artists include Ivan Kusnjer, Bambini di Praga and their conductor Bohumil Kulinsky. From Israel: members of The Group for New Music and the Van Leer Chamber Music Players.

*{Reported by Prof. David Bloch}*

### "BRUNDIBAR"

The children's opera from ghetto Terezin was performed 11 times in Toronto, Canada. Three performances for the public were given at the Leah Posluns Theatre and eight more for students of the city. The initiator of the performance, played and sung by 45 Toronto children aged 8-14 and directed by Renee Bouthot, is John Freund from Toronto. He was 13 years old when he saw the opera in the ghetto and dreamed for years to be able to have it performed in his city. John Freund is member of a public committee of 10, which backed the performance of the opera and also organized the necessary funding through various institutions and foundations.

Hans Krasa's childrens opera "Brundibar" was performed in Schwerin, Germany, by 90 students of the music academy Schwerin - music school "Johann Wilhelm Hertel". There was quite a good review in the press and the young artists performed the opera once more in Odense, Denmark, on Aug. 25th. The music academy - in cooperation with the Schwerin historical museum - published for the performance a beautiful program, illustrated with art from the ghetto and with articles about it.

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Students of the Cecilien high school in Bielefeld, Germany, helped by the town's theatres, performed "Brundibar" in November 1996 three times. Direction: Nina Lahmann, conductor: Gundola Frese. In

the same month, students of the Else Lasker-Schueler school in Wuppertal performed the opera four times. (Wuppertal is the birthplace of the poetess Else Lasker-Schueler.) For this occasion Grete Klingsberg from Jerusalem was invited - she played Aninka in 1943/44 in the ghetto. Grete K. was interviewed by the Wuppertal radio station and also met local children, who wanted to know more about Grete's fate and about the ghetto performances.

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Grete Klingsberg brought us two video tapes with recordings of "Brundibar", sung by German, Czech and Polish children. They performed the opera in three languages in Berlin, Prague and Warsaw. This project was undertaken in the summer of 1995 by Jeunesse Musicale - an organization founded 51 years ago, whose aim is to bring together youth from various countries through music. The two recordings (one by "Deutsche Welle", the other by Jeunesse Musicale) follow the preparations, rehearsals and performances and deal also with the influence of the ghetto opera on the 90 participants. Conductor: the cellist Rafael Sommer, who sang the role of the sparrow in the ghetto performance.

### BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

#### Peter Kien's Poems

The Hakibbutz Hameuhad Publishers, Tel Aviv, issued a collection of Peter Kien's poems, translated by Yedidiah Peles from the German into Hebrew. The talented painter and poet Kien, born 1919, studied at the Prague Academy of Arts and during the Nazi occupation he taught drawing in a course for Jewish youth. In the ghetto he was a graphic artist in the technical department. He was very active in Terezin cultural life, both as a painter and as a poet. One of his better known works is the libretto of the opera "Emperor of Atlantis". In the autumn of 1944, he was deported to Auschwitz. The book is illustrated with drawings made by Kien in the ghetto.

#### Gideon Klein - a Fragment of Life and Work

*(translated from the Czech by Dagmar Steinova, Prague. Published by Helvetica-Tempora 1995)*

Until recently, most writing on the four best-known composers active in Terezin was restricted to readers of Czech and German (with the important exception of Joza Karas' "Music in Terezin 1941-1945"). The publication of Milan Slavicky's book is a commendable move to correct this situation. Slavicky, composer, musicologist and professor at Charles University, has expanded his book from an earlier article published in the 1970's. At that time, Klein, trained chiefly as a pianist, was thought to have emerged as a composer only during his stay in Terezin, where he was not only one of the most active musical figures, but where he also served as a madrich (instructor) to the girls living in L-410. A strikingly handsome and immensely gifted young man, Klein was one of the most inspiring musical personalities in Terezin. He gave piano recitals, performed chamber music, accompanied singers, dancers and performances of Verdi's "Requiem" together with Rafael Schaechter. Slavicky's book is at present the single most important writing on Klein and his music: the author discusses Klein's life and personality, accomplishments as a pianist and his legacy as a composer. The latter was unexpectedly enlarged by the 1990 discovery in Prague of a treasure of manuscripts of his pre-Terezin compositions, songs for voice and piano, chamber music for strings and winds - all demonstrating a young composer of outstanding gifts, trying various contemporary techniques. This music, written between 1938 and 1940, completely alters the picture of Klein as a composer, revealing in fact that he had already achieved an impressive youthful mastery of composition before arriving in the ghetto.

The Documents section of the book offers for the first time in print Klein's musicological study of Mozart's string quartets, written as a seminar paper in his first (and only) semester at Charles University in the fall of 1939, as well as two articles from Terezin: "A few words about musical culture in Terezin" and "On the so-called political education of young people". In addition, Prof. Slavicky cites press reviews of Gideon's Prague recitals and concert performances, including - among the latter - appearances under the pseudonym Karel Vranek. There are also detailed lists of his musical sketches and compositions from juvenilia through Terezin, a list highlighting his life and activities, his performances in the ghetto, discography, source materials and an extensive bibliography. Slavicky's

quite detailed analytic notes to Klein's music will be particularly appreciated by musicians and musicologists, for until now there has been a dearth of in-depth commentary on his musical style both from the personal side and regarding its relation to other music of his time. The biographical section of the book, referring to Klein's leaving on the same transport to Auschwitz (Oct. 16, 1944), with Viktor Ullmann, Pavel Haas and Hans Krása refers, with appropriate bluntness, to having "put an irrevocable end to the work of a gifted pianist, who had everything that goes into the making of an outstanding musical personality".

*(Book report by Prof. David Bloch)*

### Theresienstadt Recipes

"In Memory's Kitchen - A Legacy from the Women of Terezin" is the title of a book of recipes edited by Cara De Silva, published in autumn 1996 by Jason Aronson, New Jersey, USA, and London. It is an authentic collection of recipes, collected by Minna Paechter in ghetto Terezin. She was born in 1872 in Hluboka in Southern Bohemia. Most of the recipes are of Czech and Austrian dishes, as remembered by Minna Paechter's neighbors and friends during their "platonic" cooking - one of the ways to forget the hunger in the ghetto. In addition to the 87 recipes there are explanations about ghetto Theresienstadt and poems and letters by Minna P. The translations from the Czech and from the German were done by Bianca Steiner Brown, who was a prisoner in the ghetto, too. Minna Paechter died in the ghetto on the Day of Atonement 1944. The copybook reached her daughter Anny Stern toward the end of the sixties, after many detours. The daughter managed to escape in time from Bohemia to Palestine and later settled in the USA. She died there. Cara De Silva was helped with information also by Alisa Schiller from Beit Terezin. Minna Paechter's grandson David Stern sent us a copy of the original booklet.

### "Romeo, Juliet and the Darkness"

is the title of a novel by the Czech author Jan Otcenasek, published in 1996 by Zmora-Bitan, Tel Aviv, in Hebrew. In the centre of the story is the tragic love affair of an 18 year old Czech and a Jewish girl, who did not present herself for the transport to Terezin. She hid in his father's workshop until the intensive searches by the Nazis after the assassination of the "Reichsprotektor" Heydrich.

### A Memorial Volume

of all Jewish victims of the Nazis from Koeln, Germany was published in 1995 by Boehlan. In addition to the names, it includes the dates of birth and transports. Beit Terezin assisted with the preparations for the book, especially the late Miriam Haisraeli - she made lists of all former Koeln residents appearing in our card index, which then was not yet computerized.

### "A Man Between the Wars"

is the name of a book by Reuven Asor, published in 1996 in Hebrew, by Yaron Golan. In the autobiographic stories, Reuven A. describes the growth of Nazism in his birthplace Dux (Duchcov) in the Sudeten and the hesitations of his parents to let their only son emigrate to Palestine. In 1942, the parents were deported to ghetto Terezin and did not return. Reuven volunteered for the Jewish Brigade (a unit of the British army) and fought in Italy. After the end of the war, he participated in the illegal smuggling of Holocaust survivors to Palestine - sometimes even in coffins. Like the picture on the cover of the book, where a smiling uniformed Reuven sits on a coffin, the book often describes humourously what in fact was hard reality.

### Literary Diary

Alisa Scheck, the curator of Beit Terezin, wrote a diary in ghetto Terezin from Oct. 18, 1944 to May 19, 1945. In the autumn of 1996, the anthology "Terezinske studie a dokumenty" published the diary in Czech translation (the original was written in German with Hebrew letters). The critic Jiri Cieslar wrote on Oct. 27, 1996 in the Czech newsletter "Respekt", that the diary is not only a testimony, but also great literature: concise, precise and with phantasy, without sentimentality and with the whole force of personal experience. Alisa Ehrmann, then 17 years old, daughter of a Jewish father who was

transported to Auschwitz (as was her friend and husband-to-be Zeev Scheck), falters in her belief in rescue. When the remainder of the participants of the "death marches" arrived in the ghetto and the corpses were piling up by the railway tracks, she wrote: "The horror is too big for unhappiness..."

#### The Fate of the Jews of the "Protectorate"

is described in depth in the introduction of the memorial book published in 1995 in Prague. The introduction was written by Miroslav Karny and translated from the Czech into Hebrew by Shimon Beer, Tel Aviv. He also took upon himself its publication under the title "Genocide of the Jews of Bohemia and Moravia". The booklet (37 pages) may be obtained at Beit Terezin for NIS 20.-.

#### Death of an Educator

Josef Algazi published a long article about the life and work of the educator Martin Gerson in a supplement of "Haaretz" of 16-8-1996. Martin Gerson - true to his principles - accompanied his wards in September 1944 voluntarily in the transport from ghetto Terezin to Auschwitz. Martin G., born 1902 near Posen, studied gardening in the Jewish school in Ahlem. The aim of this school was to bring Jewish youth closer to agriculture. Later he was the director of the "Hehalutz" agriculture training farm in Winkel near Berlin on an estate formerly owned by the Schocken family. Ilana Michaeli from kibbutz Hazorea (where 51 graduates of the training course settled) relates that Gerson originally was not a Zionist. Only after a visit to Palestine in 1935, he changed his views and saw his duty in preparing young people for their emigration to Palestine. His wards and his family have tried for many years in vain to erect a fitting memorial for Martin Gerson and the Winkel estate.

#### History of the Jews of Bohemia

Number 30/31 of the annual publication of the Prague Jewish Museum, "Judaica Bohemiae" continues the list of people interviewed by Anna Hyndrakova and Anna Lorencova in the framework of the collection of testimonies about the Holocaust. There are also the memoirs of Frank (Frantisek) Fantl, born 1926 in Brno. He remembers that his father had the opportunity - through the "Suchor" firm where he worked - to travel to France. But he refused, because he was convinced that as the bearer of high Austrian medals from WWI, nothing bad could happen to him. The Fantl family arrived in December 1941 in the newly established ghetto Theresienstadt. Frank lived at the youth home L-217 and worked in the vegetable garden. His mother worked at the mica plant and so was exempted from transports. After the father was deported to the East, she and their daughter Majda volunteered to follow him to a "work camp". They did not return. Frank worked in the Kaufering camp - at the time of liberation he weighed 30 kilograms and was near death. He returned to Brno and lives in England since 1968.

#### Women Prisoners in Hamburg

The women prisoners of camp Neugraben - formerly from ghetto Terezin, came there through Auschwitz in 1944. They are mentioned in 2 publications from the Hamburg vicinity "Suederelbe, Gestern, Heute und Morgen" and "50 Jahre Siedlergemeinschaft Falkenberg". The women worked at the erection of prefabricated houses for the bombed-out Hamburg population. The articles describe the hard living conditions of the women, but also the help they got from some of their neighbours who left food near the trash cans, where the prisoners passed on their way to work. Our archives got the brochure from Karl Heinz Schultz from Hamburg.

#### The Lindenbaum Cabaret

The only Jewish newspaper in German in the USA "Aufbau" brought a poem "Jews at the Station" by Walter Lindenbaum, Vienna.

One of the readers of the newspaper, Ernest Seinfeld (an old friend of our Beit Terezin), called our attention to Lindenbaum's poems written in the ghetto - among them "The Song of Theresienstadt", which begins with the words:

Wir sind hier 40.000 Juden	(We are here 40,000 Jews)
Es war'n viel mehr an diesem Ort	(There were much more at this place)
Und die wir nicht nach Polen verluden	(And those not loaded to Poland)
Die trugen wir in Saergen fort	(We carried away in coffins)

In "Theresienstaedter Studien und Dokumente" 1996 appeared an article about Lindenbaum by Herbert Exenberger. Lindenbaum was a journalist with the social-democratic Austrian press and wrote for satiric cabarets. In ghetto Th., where he was deported in 1943, he continued to write for the cabarets there. Known are especially "Und die Musik spielt dazu" ("And the music plays on") and "Nimmt der Herr die Suppe?" ("Does the gentleman want the soup?")

### Queen Esther in the Ghetto

The Czech periodical for musicology "Hudebni veda" published in 1994 an essay by Milan Kuna on the play "Esther". The musical, to music by Karel Reiner, was performed in ghetto Th. in the years 1943-44. A short time before the occupation of Bohemia by the Nazis, the folk play from the 18th century was performed at A. P. Burian's theatre in Prague. The writer Norbert Fryd brought the text to Terezin and he also directed the play in the ghetto. Kuna describes the play as "underground theatre about the salvation of the Jews". The score by Reiner was lost, but the composer rewrote it partially after his return from the camps. After Reiner's death Margit Silberfeld-Kampert from Jerusalem with the help of the few surviving among the actors completed the score. Kuna's article - 37 pages - contains photographs, drawings by Franta Zelenka (who created the stage and the costumes) and also parts of the score.

### Research on Terezin

in the autumn of 1996, "Academia" published the third volume of "Theresienstaedter Studien und Dokumente" - through the initiative of the "Terezinska Iniciativa Fund" - edited by Miroslav Karny, Raimund Kemper and Margita Karna. One article is by Livia Rothkirchen on "Representatives of the Self-Administration in Theresienstadt - Diversity of Opinions". A contribution about the Berlin Jews in ghetto Th. is by Rita Meyhoefer. Gerhart Riegner writes about "The Connection of the Red Cross to Terezin in the Last Stages of the War". He cites the full text of the report by Maurice Rossel, the representative of the International Red Cross, after his visit to the ghetto on June 23, 1944 - he saw there what the Germans wanted him to see. Trude Simonsohn remembers Paul Epstein, and Ruth Bondy wrote about the humoristic children's newspaper "Shalom on Friday", which appeared in the ghetto in the years 1943-44.

The Czech edition "Terezinske Studie a Dokumenty" 1996, brings some of the same articles as the German edition - partly from last year's issue. One of these is a paper by Bronka Klibanski about the children from Bialystok in Theresienstadt; Yacob Tsur wrote an article about the fate of transport Aay; Rudolf Freiburger (1906-1978), the director of the division for production in the ghetto during the years of its existence,

wrote a history of the production plants in Terezin; finally there is an essay by Peter Witte about transport Ax, which left Terezin on May 9, 1942 in the direction of Lublin - there were no survivors of the 1000 prisoners.

### "Terezin Pages"

(in the Czech original "Terezinske listy") the anthology of the state memorial in Terezin in its issue of Nov. 24, 1996 published an article by Vojtech Blodig on the town of Terezin in the years 1945-46, and about the start of reconstruction after more than three years of the ghetto there. He reports that hundreds of lorries and train waggons laden with furniture, coals, wood, victuals, textiles, household articles, sewing machines and other things left the ghetto daily.

### Escape

Worthy of admiration is the courage and pluck of Emil Lederer, as described by Alena Hajkova: Lederer had only one Jewish grandfather, but he got a Jewish education from his father. He arrived in the ghetto aged 18. Determined to escape, he volunteered for a transport of elderly people, which left on Sept. 22, 1942. He managed to leap from the waggon - and was the only surviving person from this transport. All the others were murdered at Maly Trostinec. Emil Lederer tried to reach Switzerland, was apprehended at the border, imprisoned and escaped again. For a while, he hid with his non-Jewish mother, but was again imprisoned and brought to the Gestapo prison at the "Small Fortress" of Theresienstadt. He owned up only to the escape from the ghetto and maintained that he was a Christian. He held out to the end and was liberated there. After the war, he joined the Greek-Orthodox church.

### Jewish Sites

Samuel Gruber and Phyllis Myers researched for the "United States Commission for Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad" and for the "Jewish Heritage Council" the state of Jewish historical sites in the Czech Republic. The report, published in 1994, includes a list of 54 synagogues, destroyed during the Nazi occupation in the years

1939-45 and another list of 80 synagogues (also from the 18th century) which were destroyed after WWII, most of them during the Communist regime. Out of the 210 still existing synagogues, about 40 are today in use as churches (mostly of Hussite communities). Others are converted to ammunition stores, museums, concert halls or even disco clubs, beauty parlours and workshops - some even serve as living quarters. The state of most of the 350 Jewish cemeteries is not good, though various towns in the Czech Republic took upon themselves the task to restore the remnants of the Jewish past. One example: Hermanuv Mestec declared the old synagogue, the cemetery and the Jewish school as historical sites. In the town of Susice, a memorial plaque was placed on the gate of the old Jewish cemetery, dating back to 1626. Only the cemetery reminds one of the former Jewish community, whose members were deported in 1942 to ghetto Terezin and from there to their annihilation.

### The Jewish Cultural Publication "David"

in Vienna, Austria, brought in its issue of spring 1996 a contribution by Richard Popper about Beit Theresienstadt with a description of its art collection and of the activities of the voluntary workers there, who carry out the computerization, translations and other tasks.

### ADDITIONS TO OUR ARCHIVES

#### Collection of Pictures

Our archives got 24 original pictures created in ghetto Terezin by Dr. Pavel Fantl from Kolin, Bohemia, from Gabi Loebel, Haifa. Dr. Fantl had been a friend of Gabi Loebel's late father Adolf Loebel. Among them are 3 caricatures of the performance of "Carmen" in the ghetto, drawings of an old pair, a barefoot man, a trombone player, a washing woman and others. Gabi L. gave us also original documents of his father: the discharge certificate from the work camp Lipa (Linden) where young men worked prior to being sent on transports. The certificate is signed by SS-Oberscharfuehrer Lederer. Further a notification of the Prague Jewish Community (Sept. 1941) to register for work, an order to appear at the head office for Jewish emigration before SS-Unterscharfuehrer Rahm and the protocol of the SS-headquarters in Theresienstadt, where Adolf L. had to present himself on Feb.19, 1944. The three Loebel brothers and their sister survived WWII and emigrated to Israel.

#### Courage at the critical moment

Milos Pick from Prague, born 1926, was a member of the Communist underground in ghetto Th. and as such met Gert Koerbl, one of the leading members of the "Hehalutz" movement. Milos P. gives in his testimony an account of Gert's arrival in Auschwitz in Sept. 1944. During the selection - ignoring the dogs and the threatening SS-men - he pushed right on, almost to the table of the SS-men, from there he started moving back, line after line, and warned everybody, as he had warned Pick too: "Milos, everybody under 18 and over 50 is gassed - say, that you are 20 and a worker. At least part of the people are taken for work to other camps". He got this information on his arrival from veteran prisoners. At the selection, Milos said loud and clear: "20 years - machine fitter" though he was only 18 and a student. "I do not know how many people Gert saved - all of us made in our pants from terror. And he went serenely from one to the other... Gert K. did not survive - he died in the subterranean "Richard" plant in Litomerice.

Pick also relates in his testimony the inhuman behaviour of the Sudeten residents in April 1945 - they denied all help to the starved camp inmates, the only exception was a Serb woman. The prisoners stood for 2 days in open railway cars in the Grasslitz train depot. If somebody managed to escape from the death marches, the residents betrayed him, if one asked for a piece of bread, he was chased away and threatened with the Gestapo.

#### Reminiscences of a Midwife

Leah (Lily) Sobotka was a midwife's assistant since spring 1942 at the hospital in the "Hohenelbe" barracks in ghetto Theresienstadt. She recorded her testimony in July 1996, relating that many of the pregnant women who arrived in the ghetto had

voluntary abortions. Later, when mothers with babies were exempt from transports, many decided to carry their children to term. Most of the newborn babies were very small because of the undernourishment of the mothers, so most births were easy. The babies lay in pairs in laundry baskets - for diapers rags were used and there were bedbugs, too... Leah remembers the case of a woman, who died of childbed fever, because there were no medicaments. Leah had cared for her in the basement, where she lay in isolation. In the autumn of 1944, Leah was deported to Auschwitz and from there to Maerzdorf in Silesia. In this camp were also 2 Nettle sisters from Prague. One of them managed to conceal her pregnancy till the ninth month. Leah had only scissors and rags and with these she performed the birth in March 1945. The mother had to report for a 12-hour workshift immediately after giving birth - to save her and her son Tomas's life. Both survived till the liberation and later emigrated to Australia. Leah finishes with the words: "My name as a midwife appears on more than 5000 birth certificates in Israel - but there is not one birth that I remember as vividly as that of little Tomas."

### A child in the Ghetto

Anita Butler, Vancouver, Canada, sent us the book of memoirs of the well-known Czech author Ivan Klima "Childhood in Terezin" in its English translation. Klima recounts that his parents suppressed their Jewish identity - until the Nazi occupation he had never heard the word "Jew". His father, an electronics engineer, was in the first transport to Terezin in November 1941. Two weeks later the family joined him. Ivan, then aged 10, brought 3 books with him to the ghetto: Homer, Dickens and Jules Verne. That was his main intellectual food for the next three and a half years. As he writes, being forbidden to leave the town walls bothered him more than the hunger. He discovered the healing power of writing, when he wrote a composition for his teacher. For this power there are no walls. But the biggest influence was the terror of leave-taking from friends, who were sent to the East (one of these was Arie, the son of the first "elder of the Jews"). Out of this terror came the inhibitions to make friends, to have close ties with anybody - it was better to build a wall around one's feelings.

### Smuggled Letters

Dr. Rudolf Klen from Hradec Kralove in Bohemia let us have 5 illegal letters, sent by him and his sister Hana and their friend Jura (Jiri) Fantl in 1944 from the ghetto to their families in the "Protektorat". They are written in miniature script on very thin paper. In the main the letter-writers thank for received parcels and request further food packages. They also worry about the fate of family members deported to the East. Among those was the father of Ruda and Hana, Leo Klein, who had sent a postcard from Birkenau. Dr. Klen also gave us copies of postcards received by him in the ghetto, among them the message about his mother's death after surgery in October 1942.

### Fate of a Diary

Hana Pravda nee Munkova, an actress even before her arrival in the ghetto, started to write a diary in February 1945, at the time when 1000 women were evacuated from the Birnbaeuemel camp in Poland. 350 of the prisoners died after a few days or were shot dead. Hana, together with her friend Vera, succeeded to escape. She describes

her happiness, as the two of them got some warm milk and bread from a peasant woman. Her only hope was to meet her beloved husband Sasha again. In May 1945 Hana heard that he had died a few days before liberation in Kraslice near the Czech border - and she wanted to kill herself. Here the diary ends. "It seems, that I did not do it" writes Hana Pravda, who today lives in England and had forgotten all about the diary. Her friend Lola Sott in Australia found it under the double bottom of a small box, where it was hidden for 48 years. After WWII Hana continued to act and married Jiri Pravda, a well-known Czech actor. She sent a copy of the diary to her friend Naava Shean in Israel, who gave it to our archives.

### The Last Days of the War

Marie Fantlova (Miriam Kraus) wrote down (in 1948), what had happened to her during the last days of the war: 1000 women prisoners from Czechoslovakia, Germany, Holland and Hungary were evacuated from an aircraft factory in Germany. They had worked there 12-hour shifts in thin summer clothes. Many fell ill with tuberculosis and phlegmone. They were transported in open railway cars through Bohemia, where they were given some soup and bread. The journey went on for many days, without water, until they arrived in Mauthausen. There they were welcomed by SS-women, hitting them and screaming. "I will never forget the sneering looks of the Germans, as we were dragging ourselves through Mauthausen town" Miriam wrote. In 1949 she emigrated to Israel and founded a family - in 1987 she died in Haifa. We received her memoirs from her son Danny Kraus.

### A Physician's Diary

Dr. David Heymans, born 1906, arrived in Terezin with his family in Sept. 1944 from the Westerbork camp in Holland. In the ghetto he worked as a physician. Toward the end of April 1945, emaciated skeletons, survivors of the death marches, came into the ghetto. They - and mainly a group of Dutch women who had come from Auschwitz - told him about their ordeals. Under these impressions he wrote a diary. It is quite critical about the way the health department of the ghetto administration dealt with the typhoid epidemic, which he believed led to unnecessary deaths. Dr. Heymans died in 1986 in Holland. We received a Hebrew translation of the diary (written originally in Dutch) from his son Jon, who was a child in the ghetto and lives today in Netanya. Dr. Heymans at the time showed his children intentionally the corpses, so they would never forget what the Nazis did to us. In a letter enclosed with the diary, which was written in the summer of 1945, Dr. Heymans demands for the death penalty for all Dutch collaborators.

### The Good and the Bad

Hanan Adar from kibbutz Hahotrim gave us the memoirs of Eva Roubickova, recorded on video in January 1996 in Prague. Eva remembers the hate of the Germans in Zatec (Saaz) in the Sudeten, which caused her family to move to Prague even before the Munich events. She mentions also the many failed efforts to emigrate. In ghetto Terezin she worked in agriculture - mainly minding the sheep brought to the ghetto by the Nazis from Lidice, the Czech village they had destroyed. A Czech railwayman from nearby Bohusovice station used to bring her and other ghetto inmates food parcels. Shortly before liberation, during the typhoid epidemic, he

smuggled her out of the ghetto. In the fall of 1944, as her parents were deported to Auschwitz, the 23 year-old Eva wanted to accompany them voluntarily, but the German boss of the agriculture department did not permit it - and so saved her life. Eva Roubickova has a diary (in German shorthand) which she wrote during her whole stay in the ghetto.

### Thanks to her English...

Zdenka Fantl from London finished the writing of her autobiographic book "Klid je sila, rek tatinek" ("Calmness is Power, Daddy said") in 1969. The book, in Czech, not yet printed, describes with restraint and feeling the story of her family in Bohemia and its fate during the Nazi era. Her father was arrested by the Gestapo after a neighbour denounced him for listening to the BBC - he was sentenced to 12 years of prison and died in Auschwitz in January 1945. Her brother Jiri was shot dead while trying to escape. Zdenka, then 22, succeeded to pull her younger sister out of the line during a selection in Auschwitz in 1944. The sister died later from exhaustion, aged 17. Zdenka believes that she survived because of her knowledge of English: as a girl she had heard the song by Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers "You are my lucky star" and that made her study English. During the liberation of Bergen Belsen, she dragged herself with a last effort among the corpses, almost crazy from thirst, toward a lighted barrack. An English soldier chased her away, but when he heard her perfect English, he gave her water and took her in. Zdenka Fantl acted in Terezin in various performances. In "Prinz Bettlied" all she had to do, was to cry. She also appeared in "Rabbi Akiba did not lie" and as Vashti in the musical "Esther". The book includes interesting descriptions of rehearsals and actors from these performances.

### Illustrations

Shlomo David from Tel Aviv gave our archives the copy of a hand-drawn greeting card for the birthday of his father Otto David, made by his friend Emo Groag on May 5, 1944 in Terezin. Emo also drew a bouquet of flowers, which Otto gave to his mother. The text is: "Here is a small present for you - a bigger one I haven't got." Shlomo David, then known as Robert, was as a child in the ghetto and keeps since then a list of his roommates in home Q-609.

### Letters

Ruth Matityahu, kibbutz Hazorea, gave us copies of letters, sent by her mother Emma Wohlwill in 1943 from Lisbon to various people in France, Holland and ghetto Theresienstadt. Emma W. wrote about members of the families of the addressees in occupied Europe.

### Multimedia

Sharon Huppert (third generation) chose for the subject of his graduation paper (Hof Carmel school at kibbutz Maagan Michael) the children's homes in ghetto Terezin. Supervised by Dr. Yehoyahin Kohavi from "Beit Lohamei Hagetaot", Sharon researched the circumstances leading to the establishment of the children's homes. In his paper he describes the living conditions in the various homes.

In addition, Sharon created a multimedia program on his computer, which demonstrates the main points of his paper by text, pictures and sound. The program "Homes in Terezin" was shown to many educators - at "Beit Lohamei Hagetaot", at the symposia "Computer in Education", July 1996 and "Holocaust and Education", Oct. 1996 in Jerusalem and at a meeting of three generations in Beit Terezin. It evoked much interest.

Sharon now modifies the program to make it compatible for IBM systems (the original one was done on Macintosh) to enable a wider audience, and especially students, to use it. The next stage will be translation of the program into English. Maybe one of our members could undertake this task voluntarily.

#### Dr. Benes - 90th birthday

Dr. Abraham (Dolfa) Benes, Holon, gave our archives 5 pictures from before his deportation to Terezin. Among them are caricatures of him made in 1940 by Dr. Friedmann and in 1942 by Max Placek in Prague, where Dr. Benes worked at the offices of the Jewish community.

On Nov. 17, 1996, Dr. Benes, one of the founders of our association and member of our steering committee, celebrated his 90th birthday. In the name of our members we congratulate him and wish him and us many more years of productive cooperation, as until now.

#### CORRECTIONS

In our issue No 41, under the title "Edelstein in Holland", about the paper by Yigal Benjamin regarding the Halutz movement in Holland, we wrote that Dr. Richard Friedmann (who was sent together with J. Edelstein in 1941 by Eichmann from Prague to Holland) was the director of the legal department of the Prague Jewish Community.

Dr. A. A. Benes informs us that the director of the legal department was the well-known Zionist Dr. Frantisek Friedmann, the author of the book "The Legal Status of the Jews in the Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia".

In Naava Shean's book, "I Wanted to be an Actress" a poem about a concert in an attic is mentioned, "by an unknown poet" and the same appears in the collection of Terezin children's poems "I Have Not Seen a Butterfly Around Here". Prof. Michael Flack (in the ghetto: Flach) from Washington writes to Naava, that he is the author of the poem.

#### INFORMATION REQUESTED

##### Witness of Karel Polacek's Death

Prof. Jiri Franek wrote to us: "I was looking for somebody, who saw the author K. Polacek in Auschwitz or who was at Hindenburg camp. The former prisoner Blecher contacted me and told me that Walter Jokl had helped Polacek and pulled the cart or sled, on which Polacek probably was. Walter Jokl, born 1922, arrived in Terezin on Nov. 20, 1942, was deported to Auschwitz on Sept. 28, 1944 and returned after the liberation to Prague. Does anybody know, if W. Jokl is alive, if he has family or

children? And further: did anybody hear, that Polacek was called by his friends Gaenzi?" Information please to:

Prof. Jiri Franek, Betlemska 10, 11000 Praha 1, Czech Republic

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Ernest Seinfeld is looking for information on:

Pavel Reiss, born Dec. 20, 1919 in Brno, worked in 1940-41 at the Jewish school and arrived on Dec. 2, 1941 in Terezin. There he was for about half a year an instructor at the "Sudeten" barracks and later he worked in the youth department. On Sept. 6, 1943 he was sent to Auschwitz and perished.

Alice Stein, born 1909, arrived on Dec. 2, 1941 in Terezin and worked there in the security department ("Sicherheitswesen"). She was deported on Sep. 6, 1943 to Auschwitz and from there to Hamburg. She survived and emigrated to Sidney, Australia. Information please to:

Ernest Seinfeld, 71 Pumpkin Hill Rd., New Milford CT 06776, USA.

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Yacob Tsur is looking for:

Petr Engelmann, born May 15, 1924, who was deported on July 2, 1942 to Terezin and on Sept. 28, 1944 to Auschwitz. After the liberation, he returned to Prague.

Emil Steiner, born March 4, 1920, who went with transport D-928 to ghetto Lodz (Litzmannstadt) and was liberated at Ludwigslust.

Information please to:

Yacob Tsur, Kibbutz Naan, 76829, Israel.

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Rosemary Schonfeld wants information about:

Aurelie Nelly Schoenfeldova, born Jan. 7, 1915, sent to Terezin from Ostrava Sept. 22, 1942, deported to Auschwitz Oct. 23, 1944. She returned to the ghetto and was liberated there. After the war she emigrated to Australia; (she remarried after the war, so her name has been changed). Information about friends or relations of hers would be welcome too.

Dr. Moritz Schoenfeld (husband of the former and uncle of Rosemary S.), born June 28, 1903, a radiologist who had published books on the subject. He was in Theresienstadt from Sept. 22, 1942 to Oct. 23, 1944, when he was deported to Auschwitz where he perished.

Information please to:

Rosemary Schonfeld, Cellar Flat, Buckyette Farm, Littlehempston, Totnes, TQ9 6ND Devon, England.

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Details about the Zionist resistance movement in ghetto Theresienstadt are requested for a research on this theme. Is there anybody who participated in one or both of the 2 conventions of the "Hehalutz" in Terezin? Does anyone know more about this subject?

Information please to:

[Beit Theresienstadt](#)

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Discount - Property Tax (Arnona)

According to circular letter No 96/7 from April 28, 1996 to the municipalities in Israel, those who receive disability compensation from Germany are entitled to a discount of the Arnona. (Details at the municipalities.)

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