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## **PLANS FOR THE FUTURE**

The head of our education center Anita Tarsi and Bilha Rubin, assistant manager of Beit Terezin composed a detailed document about the aims of Beit Terezin, its leading principles, financing and the ongoing activities. It includes also plans and recommendations for the future. The main conclusion: without a firm economic base no future plans can be carried out.

To secure this economic base and to mobilize the necessary finances for the establishment of an exhibition room for our art collection, the board of our association decided in August 1997 to appoint a commission. It is made up of Dan Kedar, Ruth Bondy and Nir Drori. As a first step the commission approached in October 1997 all our members in Israel, requesting an one-time contribution to a special fund for Beit Terezin. It is not intended for running expenses. And - our members have not let us down:

up to December 15, 1997 NIS 70.000 were collected.

Thanks to all the generous contributors, who in this way expressed their commitment. Now, after our Israeli members, it is the turn of our members and friends from abroad. We hope that their response will not fall behind that of the Israelis.

At the same time Beit Theresienstadt and its management is trying systematically to receive grants from ministries, institutions and foundations in Israel and abroad. This requires endless paper work, preparation of documents, balances, reports and then - waiting for an answer.

Among the arguments of a small number of our members, who did not want to contribute, was the uncertainty about the future of Beit Terezin. It is true, that none of us knows how many years we, Beit Terezin, the State of Israel, the Jewish nation and humanity as such have got in store - but one gives up only if all hope is lost. Or if one is looking for an excuse!

We plan a future to remember the past.

## **Changes, Renovations, Conservation**

One of the problems mentioned in the document by A. Tarsi and B. Rubin - lack of space for those working in Beit Theresienstadt - was solved in the meantime. The room adjoining our archives (until now used by kibbutz G. Hayim-Ihud as a video lab) was renovated and is now serving mainly for the ghetto card files and the computers.

Further we have succeeded to eliminate the echo in the remembrance room, which interfered at lectures etc. - the walls were sound-proofed.

Clay figures of characters from the life of the Jewish "shtetl", created by Haya Ploshnik of kibbutz Givat Hayim, herself a Holocaust survivor, were placed along an outer wall of the building.

## **Seeking Official Recognition**

For about two years Beit Terezin tries to get official recognition by the board of museums of the Isr. Ministry of culture. Guided by a team of this board our curator Alisah Sheck listed all drawings, paintings, documents and other items of our collection according to the system prescribed by the board. The major part of the art work was restored, the board helped with the financing. This operation will come to an end within a few months.

## **Alisah Schiller**

is now managing Beit Terezin for over 10 years. She asked to be relieved of this post some time ago and wants to dedicate her time to the updating of the computerized ghetto card file. In answer to a request by members of the second generation our board decided in August 1997 to announce an internal tender among our Israeli members for the post of manager of Beit Theresienstadt. The detailed job description was sent to all our Israeli members, the answers were due until the end of 1997. These days the tender committee will discuss the offers received.

## **ACTUALITIES**

### **Play in the Shadow of the Holocaust**

On October 13, 1997 an exhibition "No Child's Play" was opened at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem. There are dolls, games, toys and drawings made by children of many countries during the Holocaust. Among them there is a game of "Monopoly" made by the brothers Micha and Dan Glass in ghetto Terezin, dolls of a ghetto policeman and of a nurse, sewn in the ghetto, the puppet of a clown, created by Jan Klein, aged 14, instructed by Walter Freund there. Marianne Grant, Glasgow, reconstructed for the exhibition drawings of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, of Eskimos and other colorful figures, as drawn by Dina Gottlieb on the walls of the children's block at the Birkenau family camp. A special corner of the exhibition is dedicated to the illustrated children's newspaper "Kamarad" from ghetto Terezin. The curator Yehudit Inbar and her team received much help from Beit Theresienstadt.

The miniature pack of cards, the teddy bear made of sack cloth, the other exhibits and especially the accompanying touching narrations by the survivors, who had kept them, prove again, that playing is a deep human need - and doubly so in hard times.

## **Roots**

During her first visit in Israel as US Secretary of State Madelein Albright visited on September 10, 1997 Yad Vashem, a few days after a short private visit in the Czech Republic, tracing her family roots. On August 31, she visited Kostelec nad Orlici and Letohradek, where her grandparents - the Koerbel and Spiegel families - had lived. Finally she went also to the former Theresienstadt ghetto, her grandparent's last station before perishing in the Holocaust.

## **The Emperor Lives On**

The New Israeli Opera in Tel Aviv performed between December 15 and 23, 1997 the

"Emperor of Atlantis", created in the ghetto by Viktor Ullmann and Peter Kien, The Nazis forbade the opera in the ghetto - the allegory of the omnipotent emperor, who failed in war because death was on strike, was too strong. The premiere took place more than 20 years after the war. The "Emperor of Atlantis" was shown in Tel Aviv in its German original, directed by Sabine Hartmannshenn, costumes and production by Bettina Neuhaus, both from Koeln. The orchestra was under the baton of Mendi Rodan, the musical director of the Isr. Symphony Orchestra of Rishon le-Zion. This production was performed for the first time about three years ago by the National Opera of Brussels and then in Lisbon and Sarajevo and other places. At the same occasion an opera in the style of Berlin cabarets "The Seven Deadly Sins", by Brecht and Weill was performed, created in Paris after their escape from Nazi Germany. Before 5 of the performances there were special concerts of compositions created in the Terezin ghetto, played by the Group for Modern Music under the baton of Prof. David Bloch. Thanks to the helpfulness of the Opera administration Beit Terezin had a desk with information material, books etc., manned by volunteers from among our members.

On December 1, 1997 excerpts from "Emperor of Atlantis" were played in the auditorium of Yad Vashem. The pianist Edith Kraus reminisced about Ullmann and Prof. D. Bloch gave explanations about music life in Terezin. On December 6, the public had the chance to meet the cast of the opera, Michael Ajzenstadt was the emcee. The flutist Jiri Steiner - the only surviving musician from those times - spoke about his part in the rehearsals of "Emperor of Atlantis" and Ruth Bondy about the ghetto.

During the academic year 1997-98 Prof. Bloch is giving a course and a seminary about the music of V. Ullmann at the Music Faculty of Tel Aviv University.

### **Cultural Meeting**

A concert dedicated to the subject of ghetto Theresienstadt, played by 4 members of the Schwerin Conservatory, was given on November 6, 1997 at "Beit Vienna", kibbutz Givat Hayim-Ihud. There were two works by Krasa and Ullmann created in the ghetto and a sonnet and a piano concerto by Mozart, both performed in 1944 in Terezin. The initiator of the concert was Volker Ahmels, pianist and director of the Schwerin Conservatory, who devotes much effort and time to Theresienstadt music. After the concert the film "Those Days in Terezin" was shown and the audience had the opportunity to meet the producer Sybilla Schoenemann and Lena Makarova, who participated in the production. The subject of the film is Karel Schwenk, who authored cabarets in the ghetto and looks for traces of him in the Czech Republic. There are interviews with people who knew him and an improvised scene in the "Magdeburg" barracks. "Those Days in Terezin" was shown in the Jerusalem cinemateque on October 30, 1997 during a week of Holocaust films and then, three days later, at the Goethe Institute in Tel Aviv, in the presence of the Minister for Culture of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

### **Simon Adler Museum**

A museum in memory of the 110 Jewish communities of Western Bohemia destroyed in the Holocaust was established in Dobra Voda near Hartmanice in the Sumava area. It was opened on July 9, 1997 with the participation of many well-known personalities, in the house in which rabbi Dr. Simon Adler was born. One room with

documents about his life and work as rabbi, teacher, researcher and archivist is dedicated to his memory. Rabbi Adler was deported with his family in March 1943 to ghetto Terezin and from there in May 1944 to Birkenau, where he and his wife perished. The youngest son Wolfgang - now rabbi Sinai Adler - survived and joined his eldest brother Matityahu (Max), who came to Palestine in 1939. The museum was erected through cooperation of the Czech Ministry of Culture, the Hartmanice municipality, the Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic, the Prague Jewish Museum and the Plzen District Museum.

### **Pardubice, the Metropolis of Eastern Bohemia**

which once was also the metropolis of the Jewry of this area is today practically "free of Jews". But - it's citizens and elected officials remember "their" Jews. On November 7, 1997 - the 55th anniversary of the transports from Pardubice to Terezin, an ecumenical prayer service was held at the Protestant church, several Christian congregations took part. One month later the service was repeated in the hall of the crematorium Panychid. On this occasion the secretary of the Israeli embassy spoke (in Czech), and five dignitaries spoke about the fate of the Jews in the past and of their relationship to the town. There was accompanying music and the ceremony was concluded with the Israeli and Czech anthems.

### **Suppliers of Zyklon B**

At the former Ballin house in Hamburg, called during the Nazi era Messberghof, a memorial tablet was affixed on June 1, 1997, saying:

"The firm Tesch & Stabenow, whose offices were in the business building Messberghof, supplied the poison gas Zyklon B to the concentration camps Auschwitz, Majdanek, Sachsenhausen, Ravensbrueck, Stutthof and Neuengamme". The proprietors and managers of the firm were sentenced and executed in 1946 by a British military court. There were differences of opinion before the tablet was put up. The subsidiary of "Deutsche Bank", which owns the building, did not approve, arguing that "the public commemoration could have a negative influence on leases. During the unveiling of the tablet the director of the bank Tessen von Heydebreck apologized for the delay caused by the bank.

We received this contribution from Karl Heinz Schultz, who is very active in the Hamburg district in re commemorating the Holocaust victims.

### **An exhibition "Children in the Concentration Camp Theresienstadt "-**

drawings and verse - was opened in November 1997 at the Hadamar memorial site. On this occasion the film "Brundibar" was screened. This information reached us from "Gedenkstaetten-Rundbrief" ("Stiftung Topographie des Terrors"), the roof organization of memorial sites for Holocaust victims in Germany. Hadamar was one of the euthanasia centers, where German mental patients, retarded and otherwise "undesirable" persons were killed by gas - prior to the extermination of Jews.

### **The "Hana Greenfield Fund"**

in cooperation with the Education Department of the central Czech memorial site

"Pamatnik Terezin" organized two competitions for Czech students. The subject of the written competition was "A Human Being is No Number" and the competition for visual art was titled "The One Does One Thing and The Other One Another Thing". 319 students from 40 schools took part.

### **"Voices from Theresienstadt"**

is the name of a solo performance of the Norwegian actress Bente Kahan, in summer 1997 at the New End Theater in Hampstead, London. Bente Kahan plays five different women living together in one of the ghetto barracks. The play includes cabaret chansons from Terezin - the chanson "As if" ("Als ob") is somehow the motto.

### **At the "New" Jewish Cemetery in Prague-Strasnice**

which is now 100 years old, memorial tablets for famous Jewish-Czech artists killed by the Nazis were unveiled on August 31, 1997. The tablets were designed by the painter A. Krejca and affixed to the wall near Franz Kafka's tomb. The project was carried out with the help of "Terezinska iniciativa", the Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic and a donation from Switzerland. The author Arnost Lustig eulogized the artists and also remembered the last days of the cabaret author Karel Schwenk during the death march from the concentration camp Meuselwitz - Buchenwald.

### **Righteous Gentiles**

Frantisek Makovsky, from a small Czech village served as a gendarme in the Eastern part of Czechoslovakia. After the German occupation he was stationed as guard in ghetto Terezin. According to testimonies of survivors, submitted to Yad Vashem, Makovsky smuggled for the prisoners medicines, food and letters. In September 1943 he saved the lives of about 35 women by skipping over their names while checking lists for a transport to Birkenau. Because of his help to prisoners he was arrested and incarcerated in the "Small Fortress". In June 1997 his son received from the Israeli ambassador in Prague Rafael Gvir the decoration "Righteous gentile" for F. Makovsky, who died in 1974.

For himself and for his adoptive mother Ruzena Smidova, who died twenty years ago, Bohumil Bohdan - aged 84 - received this decoration at the same time. Both hid in a hollow below the floor of their small house in Revnice four Jews and cared for their clothing and food. In August 1943 both were arrested and imprisoned, probably after neighbors denounced them. Bohdan was in the concentration camp at Buchenwald. The four Jews were arrested too and deported to Auschwitz - but all survived. Asked, what made him risk his life for Jews Bohdan said: "For that I needed only my heart".

### **No Restitution Payments**

The problem which has occupied our sister association "Terezinska iniciativa" now for many months are the personal restitution payments from Germany. A settlement signed in April 1997 by Germany and the Czech Republic determined the establishment of a "future fund" for Nazi victims living in the Czech Republic for the erection of parents homes and sanitariums. The name and aims of this fund are an irony: most of the 2000

(Jewish) potential candidates are in their seventies - they have not the time to wait years until these institutions are built. And also: they do not want general social welfare - they ask for regular personal restitution, like that received by all other survivors. The prolonged and tiring negotiations which the representatives of the 9000 Czech Nazi victims conduct through the Czech Foreign Ministry with the German government bore no success so far.

### **"The Spirit of Theresienstadt"**

was the title of a special concert played by the Oregon Symphony Orchestra in cooperation with the "Oregon Holocaust Research Center" on November 4, 1997. The festive event included piano compositions - created in ghetto Terezin, an historic review by Prof. Marshal Lee, a speech by rabbi Emanuel Rose about the Jewish spirit, as realized in Theresienstadt and part of Verdi's "Requiem". In the second part of the evening the "Symphony of Sorrow" by the Polish composer Heinrich Gorecki was performed. H. Gorecki visited Auschwitz as a child, on occasion of a school excursion - it took years till he was able to express his feelings about the camp in this work.

### **The "Iniciativa Hans Krasa"**

in Hamburg organized there in April 1997, in the hall of the Kammertheater, a weekend dedicated to the music of Theresienstadt. There was a concert with works by Krasa, Ullmann, Klein and also music written by Max Brod and others in the twenties and thirties. One evening was devoted to Ullmann - with 12 chapters from the "Weise von Liebe und Tod des Cornets Christoph Rilke" for piano and vocalists. The pianist and director of the Schwerin Conservatory Volker Ahmels was the initiator here, too.

### **The "Canadian Opera Company"**

in Toronto performed the opera "Emperor of Atlantis" by Ullmann and Kien, created in ghetto Terezin, five times between November 23, and 30, 1997. Prior to the performance the cast of the opera visited the Holocaust Education and Memorial Center in Toronto, to deepen their knowledge about the Holocaust generally and ghetto Terezin especially. There they also met survivors living in Toronto. From October 30, to November 9, 1997 a week devoted to the Holocaust and Education was held in Toronto. In its framework there were many events, lectures, discussions, films, meetings with survivors and artistic performances. In November there was also - for the second year running - a performance of the children's opera "Brundibar" , which was performed 55 times in the ghetto. It was also broadcast by the "CBC", under the baton of S. Detoit, with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra. The children's choir of Toronto gave in November 1997 a potpourri of 18 children's songs composed in the ghetto. The program was also broadcast on the radio on December 14, 1997, accompanied by explanations by John Freund, who was a child in the ghetto and lives in Toronto.

## **OUR EDUCATIONAL CENTER**

### **Study Days in Beit Terezin**

In 1997 we organized about 100 study days on the subject of ghetto Terezin with

some 4200 high school pupils, students and adults from Israel and abroad participating. For 1998 further subjects were prepared for the workshops, among them one about "Yad Tomehet" ("Supporting Hand") - the organization of youth in the ghetto for aid to the aged.

For the months January - May 1998 about 60 study days are planned, each of them including also an oral testimony of a survivor from among our members. The team of the educational center thanks all our members who devote much time and energy to the giving of testimonies. All, who do not yet take part in this important undertaking, are requested to share their experiences with the students.

### **In the Framework of Advanced Teachers Training**

by Yad Vashem all over Israel we were requested to organize study days on the subject of ghetto Theresienstadt for teachers and Kindergarten teachers. Until now they took place in Kfar Saba, Netanya and Rishon leZion. The recurring requests for our cooperation testify to the rising interest in the history of the ghetto and, it seems, in the special way we present the topic.

### **About 20 Study Days**

were held in German for groups of adults from Germany. Such a workshop includes the screening of our film "Theresienstadt 1941 - 1945", a lecture, an oral testimony and discussions. Many of the participants remarked on the importance of the meeting in Beit Terezin and of the special program, which is very different from programs of other memorial institutions in Israel.

### **Youth Groups to the Czech Republic and to Poland**

absolve prior to their tour in Terezin 12 study days, which include also the subject of the "Family Camp in Birkenau" and information about other camps, to which ghetto prisoners were deported.

Thanks to the initiative of the Youth Department of the Isr. Ministry of Education a special workshop was organized for teachers accompanying such groups, in July 1997. In addition to the usual program there are also details about the excursions in Terezin and practical questions e.g. the organization of a memorial ceremony.

### **The Director of the Youth Department**

of the Isr. Ministry of Education Oded Cohen proposed to us, to publish a guide book for the Israeli visitor to Terezin, especially for youth. Hanna Drori and Dr. Yehuda Huppert (Kibbutz Hahotrim) are undertaking this work. A joint team of the Youth Department and Beit Theresienstadt will determine the exact content and form of the brochure. We count on financing by the Ministry of Education.

### **Internet**

<http://www.cet.ac.il/history/terezin> - a new internet site called "To be in Terezin" was opened by the Center for Educational Technology in cooperation with our educational center. It includes a data base built on original documents from the ghetto (orders of the day, diaries, drawings, verse, essays, children's newspapers etc.) and on

testimonies and memoirs published after liberation and also on research papers from Israel and abroad. The site enables one to study topics like historic background, definitions, events and maps.

The advantage of the internet compared to a book or to a CD-ROM is in its elasticity. It can be further developed and updated systematically. It may also be used in discussion groups vis-a-vis witnesses, researchers and students. A study day for history teachers was held on November 25, 1997, in the Center for Educational Technology in Tel Aviv, to acquaint them with the site. The participants were prompted to recommend the site to their students as a base for papers on ghetto Terezin.

### **"Youth in Ghetto Theresienstadt"**

is a project for the development of an educational environment, now nearing its conclusion. The final product will be a CD-ROM, which will enable the student to research various subjects about the life of youth in the ghetto. With help of a computer and the mouse he can read testimonies and documents, listen to music, view art work and read verse and prose written by youth in the ghetto. The first part - about 15 minutes - deals with hunger in the ghetto and is based on essays and stories by young authors in Terezin. The project is financed in part by the "Bequests Fund" and in part by the Youth Department of the Isr. Ministry of Education.

(Reported by Anita Tarsi)

### **STUDENT'S PAPERS**

Sharon Huppert prepared - in the framework of his final history paper at the "Hof Hacarmel" high school, kibbutz Maagan Michael - a multi-media program on the subject of children's homes in ghetto Terezin. For this work he was awarded the "Gur Aryeh" prize by the director for education in settlements and Youth Aliyah. The ceremony was held on December 11, 1997 at the Ben Gurion campus, Emek Hefer.

Maayan Tene from kibbutz Mishmar Hasharon, who studies at the "Shahar" high school, kibbutz Eyn Hahoresht devoted her final history paper to children's poems in ghetto Terezin. In the paper Maayan analyzes poems, expressing the hard life in the ghetto and others, written after the liberation. Her conclusion: the memories stay on - for life.

Keren Tieberg from Hod Hasharon wrote her literature paper about one single poem: "Garden" by Franta Bass, aged twelve, written in ghetto Terezin, which expresses his premonition of approaching death. Franta perished in autumn 1944 in Birkenau. The paper includes an interview with Uri Bass, Franta's brother, about their family and their home town Brno. Keren dedicated her work to her grandmother Vera Fischl, who was in ghetto Terezin.

Chen Maor, kibbutz Givat Hayim-Ihud, "Shahar" school at Eyn Hahoresht, deals in his history paper with the death marches. On the basis of survivor's testimonies about hunger, humiliation and abuse Chen deduces, that the death marches belong to the gravest crimes of the Nazi regime - perhaps especially so, because they happened at war's end.

All these students were assisted in their work by Beit Theresienstadt.

## **OUR ARCHIVES**

### **Rare Collection**

Willy Groag from kibbutz Maanit gave us a collection which had belonged to his parents Trude and Emo Groag. It includes original drawings made by mo in the ghetto, dozens of letters written by Emo and Trude in Terezin at times, when they could not meet because of illness or curfew, notes by both about performances they had seen in the ghetto and other documents - a total of more than 100 items. Emo Groag worked as a carpenter, Trude nursed elderly patients (among others she took care of Trude Herzl-Neumann, Theodor Herzl's daughter) and also worked as kindergarten teacher. Some time ago Willy already gave us a collection of children's creations made under Trude's guidance in the ghetto.

### **Death Dates Corrected**

Four years ago the State Archives in Auschwitz-Birkenau received more than 60.000 documents about the camp, which were brought after the liberation by the Red Army to the Soviet Union. They include books with entries about death cases in 1943, about men, who survived the selections but died a "natural" death from hunger, illness or torture in the main camp. In answer to a request by Beit Terezin the State Museum in Auschwitz sent us in October 1997 a list of 203 names of all deceased listed in the books, who had been in ghetto Theresienstadt. This list will enable us to enter the death dates in our computerized card file - until now there is only the date of transport to Auschwitz.

### **Scream from Izbica**

Ora Hermann, Givat Hayim-Ihud, gave us a copy of a unique document: a letter (4 pages) which was sent illegally by Ida Hermann and her daughter Fritzi from Izbica in the Lublin district to friends in Bohemia. The Hermanns arrived on April 24, 1942 in ghetto Theresienstadt and 3 days later they were sent on in transport Aq - whose destination was the extermination camp Izbica. Fritzi pleads for help, mainly for her small daughter Evicka, and writes, that immediately after their arrival in Lublin the women were separated from the men and since then there are no news from them. The two women recount the pangs of hunger, the horrible living quarters and the loss of all their belongings and beg for clothes, food, money and sewing articles. "I have no clothes and no shoes for Evicka" Fritzi writes and the 62-years old Ida adds: "You don't know how hunger hurts".

Out of 1000 persons in transport Aq only one woman survived, who succeeded to escape from Izbica and to find a hiding place in Warsaw.

### **Wandering of a Bank Note**

The honorary consul of Latvia in Haifa Dr. Lev Chlavin, who is in contact with Beit Terezin for many years, saw during a visit in Latvia a bank note of 20 Kronen in the

window of an antiques shop. It was printed in 1943 for ghetto Theresienstadt. Dr. Chlavin bought the note from the shopkeeper, who did not know anything about its past. In July 1997 Dr. Chlavin presented us with it.

### **Werner Neufliess**

from Shavei Zion, who was a gardener in the ghetto, gave us a badge of the Communist party, worn surreptitiously in ghetto Terezin. The badge, made in the ghetto, shows the 5-pointed Soviet star.

### **The Last School Year**

We received a black bound copy-book, which belonged to Zebulon Ehrlich - a teacher at the Jewish primary school in Prague. The teacher wrote down the exact weekly time-table for his - the 5th - class, with the various subjects: Czech grammar, composition, mathematics, geography, civics, calligraphy and handicrafts. In the music lesson the pupils learned among others the Hebrew song "Lamerhakim mafligot hasfinot". The first entry is dated October 16, 1939 - the last May 9, 1940. This was the last school year Jewish children in the Protectorate were allowed to attend school.

### **The Women of Theresienstadt**

We received two unknown poems written in German in ghetto Terezin, from Ruth Alon, kibbutz Beit

Hashitah. Margit Halevi from Jerusalem found them among papers of her mother Toni (Tinka) Heilpern, who died in 1969 in Vienna, aged 80. Toni Heilpern and her husband came to the ghetto from Vienna and left it in February 1945 with a transport to Switzerland. It is not known who wrote the poems, but their content points to one of the aged women from Germany or Austria. The poem "Was tut sich in Theresienstadt" ("What's New in Theresienstadt") contains: "...das sind die stillen Helden / die keine Dichter melden / Licht und ein bisschen Ofenglut fuer unsere alten Knochen / wir wollen nicht mehr zur Essenstund im Hofe frierend stehen..." ("...these are the silent heroes / no poet mentions them / light and some heat for our old bones / we do not want at dinnertime to stand freezing in the yard...").

The second poem lauds the "Women of Theresienstadt", the anonymous heroines like the one who rises at 5 o'clock in the morning to wash her sick husband, before going to work and - returning tired to death - she hurries in rain and wind to fetch his food. "Zwei Kinder sind in Polen und zwei in Uebersee, die Not von diesen Tagen werde ich bestimmt ertragen, dass ich sie wiederseh!" ("Two children are in Poland and two over the sea, the misery of these days I will surely bear, to see them once again!").

### **Guest Book**

The cafe in ghetto Theresienstadt, opened in autumn 1943 in the framework of the "Verschoenerungsaktion" ("beautification") in preparation for the forthcoming visit of a commission of the International Red Cross, was managed by the pedantic Otto Weissenstein. In his miniature guestbook dozens of artists signed their names during the months September - November. The artists performed there and some friends - who enjoyed sitting for two hours on a chair (quite rare in the ghetto) - signed too. Among the names in the booklet - below verses, greetings and cordial dedications -

are the cabaret author Walter Lindenbaum and the composers Karel Ancerl and Hans Krása. The painter Otto Ungar drew his own tired features and wrote: "Being in the cafe helped me to forget the hard times in Theresienstadt". The singer Heda Grab-Kronenmayer writes, that she will not forget Weissenstein's "black curls and gypsy eyes". Otto Weissenstein was deported in September 1944 to Birkenau and did not survive. We received a copy of the booklet from Nathan Steiner, Ramat Gan.

### **Youth for the Aged**

A further chapter in the memoirs of Dov Berl Herschkovitz from Ashdod about ghetto Terezin deals with "Yad Tomehet" ("Supporting Hand"). This was a youth organization for assistance to the aged from Germany and Austria, who were sent, usually unaccompanied, to ghetto Terezin. For lack of other living space they were accommodated in the attic of the barracks, from where most of them could not get to the water taps and latrines on the lower floor. The first "Jewish elder" of the ghetto Yakob Edelstein called on the representatives of the youth movements and "Hehalutz", to come to the aid of the old people. The boys and girls helped them to the latrines and stood for them in the food lines (albeit in the beginning the old people were afraid to let them have their ration cards - they feared not to get them back). Slowly friendships developed between the generations. But even the tough halutzim found it hard, to remove the many corpses, which were lying for hours among the living. In an urgent conference the halutzim asked Edelstein, to move the old people from the attics to more humane quarters - and successively that came about. The driving force of "Yad Tomehet" was Sonja Okun, the (Hebrew) name was proposed by the Hebrew teacher Ben-Zion Weiss.

### **Mihal Bar**

(Maud Steckelmacher), Tel Aviv, added to the material previously given to Beit Terezin another fragment of her memories titled "Mr. Samet". In July 1942 the Jews of Prostejov - and among them, she, her parents, her younger sister and her grandparents - were deported to Theresienstadt. On the way she saw Mr. Samet, formally owner of a deli, where exotic fruit e.g. Californian oranges were sold. Being a Zionist, Mr. Samet used to import grapefruit from Palestine, too - but nobody knew how to eat them. Now he was walking bent over, with a heavy rucksack on his back - and she never saw him again. Only many years later Mihal learnt that Mr. Samet was sent a few days after his arrival in the ghetto with transport AAy to the East. This whole transport was murdered near Baranovicz, nobody survived.

### **Translations**

Shimon Weissbaecker, Haifa, who translated for Beit Terezin (as a volunteer) all the Orders of the Day from the ghetto (German into Hebrew), has now started a translation of selected parts of the book "Antlitz einer Zwangsgemeinschaft" ("Face of a Forced Community") by H.G.Adler about ghetto Theresienstadt, published 1955 in Germany. Until now it was not translated - neither into English, nor into Hebrew, perhaps because of its size.

Magda Katzenstein, Petah Tikva, also a voluntary translator, translated the diary of

Charlotta Weinstein-Vermesova, which she wrote as a girl in the ghetto (from Czech into Hebrew).

### **"Tauschung und Wirklichkeit"**

("Deception and Reality") is the name of a video film, made in 1977 by "Cronos" about ghetto Theresienstadt, producer: Irmgard von zur Muehlen, research: Karl Margry from Utrecht university. The tape - 90 minutes - includes till now unknown fragments from the first film made in the ghetto, produced in 1943 by Irena Dodalova. In this connection Zuzka Tieberg-Weiss from Tel Aviv relates in the film, that one day in 1943 she was ordered - together with a few other young women - to report at a swimming pool, of whose existence in the ghetto she had not known. There they were ordered to strip and to run into the water. Only then they saw the uniformed German camera men and their assistants from the ghetto. "I was embarrassed only in front of the boys I knew" Zuzka says. The film includes also aerial views of Terezin town with all its walls and ditches - the town is quite beautiful, seen from above. Irmgard von zur Muehlen gave us a copy - Beit Terezin helped with the production.

### **The Film "Voices of Children"**

by Zuzana Justmann deals with three persons: Helga Hoskova from Prague, Helga Kinsky from Vienna and Michael Kraus from Brookline, USA. All three were children in ghetto Terezin and wrote diaries. Helga Hoskova's diary was hidden by her father, who was disabled in WWI and remained in the ghetto. Helga Kinsky - then Weiss - left her drawings and her diary with friends who stayed in the ghetto when she was deported to the East. Misha took his diary with him and it was lost in Birkenau - but he reconstructed it immediately after the liberation. The well-known painter Helga Hoskova, married to a gentile Czech, relates that she never succeeded to free herself from her Holocaust experiences. Helga Kinsky baptized her first-born daughter to spare her a similar fate and for many years she kept her Jewishness and her concentration camp experience secret. Misha never told his daughters about his Holocaust years, to let them have a happy childhood and to give them all he was denied.

Zuzana Justmann gave us copies of the film.

### **"Our Families"**

(Jews of Austria in WWII) is the title of a brochure by Gila and Yitzhak Arnon from kibbutz Yas'ur. The families Podzamcze, Jakobowitz, Schmalholz and Rosenberg came to Vienna from Galicia, part of them succeeded to emigrate in time, part was sent in transports to their deaths - of these some through ghetto Terezin.

### **"In Memoriam"**

is the title of a book with the names of the Holocaust victims of the Netherlands, published 1995 in Den Haag. We received it from Oeke Hoogendijle - de Jong, Amsterdam. There are about 100.000 names, it is based on the memorial volumes of the Association of War Victims in Den Haag. 5.000 Dutch Jews were sent from Westerbork camp to ghetto Theresienstadt. Alisah Sheck is now working on a comparison of the dates in this list with our computerized card file.

## **BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS**

### **Written in Real Time**

"Kar'u lo Haver" ("They Called him Comrade") is the name of a book about the newspaper "Kamarad", put out by children from home Q-609 in ghetto Terezin in the years 1943-1944. The book was published by Yad Vashem in November 1997 with assistance of our association. Ruth Bondy translated the 22 original (Czech) issues, which are in the possession of Beit Terezin and also wrote the introduction, describing the cultural background of the 12-to 14-years old boys, who lived in the home and also a general description of the various children's homes.

The driving force of "Kamarad", redactor and illustrator was Ivan Pollak from Nachod. In a series "How the Kamarad is Produced" he explains the problems of getting the materials, mainly paper, often very scarce in the ghetto and the hardships of writing in a cramped and noisy room, sitting on a cot. The colored comics-series about a race-driver, drawn by Ivan and a serial roman "With a Rocket Around the World", a column on football and other contributions testify to the "normalcy" of children in the Holocaust - quite different from the stereotype accepted today. Of the 28 boys who wrote for the "Kamarad" only 4 survived: the brothers Steiner, who were among "Mengele's twins", Misha Kraus, today in the US and Harry Osers, who lives in Venezuela. Misha and Harry stayed alive through an ironic quirk: they were deported to Birkenau in 1943 - and not in autumn 1944, with all the rest. The book can be obtained in Beit Terezin (NIS 45.-, including postage in Israel: NIS 50.-)

### **Complicated Relations**

Moshe Yegar, Israel ambassador in Prague in 1993-1995 deals in his book "Czechoslovakia, Zionism and Israel: Shifts and Turns in Complex Relations" ("Hassifria Hazionit", Jerusalem, autumn 1997) with the often very complicated relations between the two states. At various times there was real friendship - but at other times there was deep enmity, which reached its peak during the Slansky trials and the breaking off of diplomatic relations after the 6-day war.

The most amiable relations between the Czechoslovak state and Zionism were during the time of the first president T.G.Masaryk, who also visited Palestine in 1927. Less is known about the assistance his son Jan Masaryk gave to Jews and Israel, as Foreign Minister in the first Republic and also in the exile government in London, but especially after WWII, when he allowed Holocaust survivors fleeing from Eastern Europe on their way to Palestine, to cross Czechoslovakia. He also supported the shipment of arms during the Israeli war of liberation. After the "velvet revolution" and the change of the regime, the friendship was renewed, as expressed in the visit of president Havel in Israel a short time after his election.

### **The Life of a Geographer**

Alfred Philippson, one of the best-known geographers of his generation, wrote his memoirs in ghetto Theresienstadt (1941-1945). They were published in Bonn at "Bouvier" under the title "How I Became a Geographer". Thanks to his friendship with his classmate, the pro-Nazi Swedish writer Sven Hedin, the 78-years old Prof.

Philippson was accorded the status of "Prominent A" and therefore not transported to an extermination camp. He, his wife and daughter survived in the ghetto and after liberation were brought in a special bus by the municipality of Bonn to the city, where his father, a rabbi from Krakow, had lived since 1862. Philippson, who was allowed to bring books into the ghetto from his library at Bonn University, died in his home town in 1953.

### **Collections of Poems by Michael Flach (Flack)**

written from 1938 to 1946 were published in the Czech original in summer 1997 by "Terezinska iniciativa" under the title "Ohlednuti z velke dalky" ("Looking Back from Far Away"). M. Flach, a well-known Professor for international relations in Washington, was in ghetto Terezin head of the children's home L-310. In the book are poems written prior to his arrival in the ghetto, during his stay there, in Auschwitz, in camp Meuselwitz-Buchenwald and also after the liberation and his return home, to Czechoslovakia. (The book can be obtained in Beit Terezin - NIS 25.-)

### **"Traitors in the Second World War"**

is the title and the theme of a new book by Reuven Assor, Jerusalem, published in 1997 (Hebrew) by Yaron Golan. Reuven Assor, born in Duchcov (Dux), Bohemia, dedicated the book to his grandfather and his parents Wilhelm and Trude Zentner. They were deported in April 1942 from Prague to Terezin and a few days later to the extermination camp Izbica.

There are 20 stories of Nazi-collaborators from Quisling to Petain, among them that of Dr. Emil Hacha, head of the High Court of Czechoslovakia, who in 1938 was elected president in place of Dr. E. Benes and stayed in this office during the Nazi occupation, too. After the liberation in 1945 the aged Hacha was incarcerated in the "Pankrac" prison and died there after a short time.

### **He Never Forgot**

"The Death of the Hangman of Riga" (Hebrew), the full story about the only Israeli operation to liquidate a Nazi criminal, was published in autumn 1997 by "Keter". The authors are Gad Shimron and "Anton Kuenzle" - an alias from those times, since even today he does not want to reveal his real identity. The book deals with the killing of Herberts Cukurs, aviator and a hero in his Latvian homeland, who joined the SS and was in charge of the murder of Riga's Jews. There is the detailed description of the patient tracing and exacting preparations, culminating in February 1965 in a small villa in Montevideo. On the crate with Cukurs body the Israeli avengers put the inscription: "Those who will never forget".

"Kuenzle", born in 1919 in Germany, arrived in 1934 by himself and is a high-ranking officer in the Israeli army. He dedicated the book to the murdered Jews of Riga and to his parents, "upright and honest people, who during their life healed many persons and helped them and perished in the Holocaust". "Kuenzle's" father died in ghetto Theresienstadt in May 1944, his mother was deported a few days later to Birkenau.

### **Research on Theresienstadt**

"Terezinske studie a dokumenty" (Theresienstadt studies and documents), a collection

in the Czech language, edited by Miroslav Karny and Margita Karna, was published in 1997 by "Akademia" and "Nadace terezinska iniciativa". Rita Mayhofer writes about Berlin Jews in Terezin, Miroslav Karny about the escape of Vitezslav Lederer from the Birkenau family camp and the connection with the Czech resistance, Livia Rothkirchen about resistance of the spirit in Theresienstadt, Ruth Bondy about humor as a weapon. The collection includes also the 4 last letters written by the first "Elder of the Jews" of Terezin, Jacob Edelstein. Three were written in Terezin and the last in the Auschwitz "Strafbunker" (punishment lock-up) - on January 26, 1944. It is addressed to Dr. Munk in ghetto Theresienstadt and written by the steady hand of a man unbroken. Miroslav Kryl deals in his contribution with the tireless activities of Fritz Ullmann, member of the Czechoslovak Zionist movement who during WWII was the representative of the Jewish Agency in Geneva. He did much to aid the Terezin prisoners through contact and parcels.

### **Two Thick Volumes**

with names of Holocaust survivors in the USA, edited by Benjamin & Vladka Mead, were given to our archives by Sarah Ogilvie, the vice director of the "Registry of Jewish Holocaust Survivors". One volume lists the names in alphabetic order, the second according to their places of residence (prior to the Holocaust), with a registration number, but without present address. This is available only with consent of the survivor. Since starting the registration in 1991 about 100.000 detailed forms were collected. In 1993 they were transferred to the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington.

### **A Boy's Diary**

Otto Wolf, aged 15, began his diary in June 1942. At this time his parents, his sister Felicitas and he did not present themselves for transport as ordered. They hid with friends in the Moravian village Trstice near Olomouc and in other places, even in ditches in the woods. During 147 weeks Otto noted pedantically all details of their life, the weather, food, what they did (every Saturday he writes "we prayed"), names of Czechs who helped them with food and hiding places. But in April 1945 - a few days before liberation - Otto Wolf was caught by a group of fascists ("Vlasovci"), tortured and burnt alive. "The Diary of Otto Wolf" was published (in Czech) in 1997 in Prague by "Sefer" and "Terezinska Nadace", edited by Dr. Ludvik Vaclavek.

### **Heydrich's Reign of Terror**

A collection of German documents titled "Deutsche Politik in 'Protektorat Boehmen und Maehren' unter Reinhard Heydrich 1941-42", edited by Miroslav Karny, Margita Karna and Jaroslava Milotova was published in 1997 by "Metropol" in Berlin. Among the 108 published documents is a report by the Prague Sicherheitspolizei dated October 15, 1941 regarding the readiness of the Wehrmacht, to evacuate the town of Theresienstadt "should this be necessary for political reasons". Obviously the idea, to designate a small town in the "Protectorate: as a ghetto for aged from Germany, was already raised by Heydrich on November 19, 1941, as Goebbels writes in his diary - two months before the Wannsee conference. A document dated October 30, 1941 mentions a group of 5 "terrorists", among them the Jew Georg Israel Stricker, "who described himself as the leader of the group and who declared even after his arrest,

that he would do all to harm Germany". The five were executed.

### **The Small Fortress**

The Gestapo prison near Terezin continued to function for 2 1/2 years after war's end. It became a concentration camp for Germans and collaborators. According to a paper by Marek Poloncarz titled "Internierungslager fuer die deutsche Bevoelkerung, Kleine Festung Terezin 1945 - 1948" ( Detention Camp for the German Population, Small Fortress Terezin 1945 - 1948) published in 1997 in Czech by "Pamatnik Terezin" some 3800 men, women and children passed through the camp during this time. 550 - 600 met their death there, mainly in the first "wild" epoch, when the Czech guards abused the Germans, even if they did not belong to the SS and were not active Nazis. The majority of these prisoners of the Small Fortress were deported successively to Germany.

### **Return to Theresienstadt**

One of the chapters in Martin Gilbert's book "The Boys" (Weidenfeld & Nicholson, London) deals with the arrival of the remnants of the death marches in ghetto Terezin, shortly before liberation. The majority was totally exhausted, near death. They were cared for in the hospitals and recovered slowly, even though there was not enough food. After the end of the war and recovery some of the boys from Poland returned there, hoping to find traces of their families. During their wanderings there they were robbed of almost anything they had been given in Terezin, they found hatred and their life was threatened by the Polish population. Most decided to return to Theresienstadt. There they organized in groups (boys up to the age of 16), to emigrate to England. Some even lowered their age to be able to start a new life - far from Poland.

### **The Institute for Jewish Culture in Lund**

(Sweden) published, after the art exhibition from Beit Terezin in 1995, a brochure titled "The Night was Dark and Long - Voices from Ghetto Theresienstadt". It was edited by Sarah Forssell and Anita Marcus and describes the life of the children in the ghetto in text and pictures. There is also a list of all children born from 1936 to 1939, who went through the ghetto. The list was compiled with the aid of our computerized card file. The brochure includes the biography of Yehuda (Polda) Huppert, who was in Lund for the opening of the exhibition.

### **The Association for the Perpetuation of the Memory of the Jews of Lower Saxony**

in Hannover, Germany, published a brochure "Names and Fates of the Jewish Victims of National Socialism from Hannover" (in German), edited by Peter Schulze. The researcher succeeded to find out the fate of 3400 citizens of the town and its vicinity during the Holocaust. The list of their last stations is made up of the infamous names: Theresienstadt, Izbica, Sobibor, Riga, Auschwitz. Another list of Jews from Hannover who escaped from Germany and then in many cases became Holocaust victims in other countries is called "Who Knows Their Fate?"

## **The Rediscovery of a Poet**

The Czech weekly "Literarni noviny" brought in September 1997 an article by Marek Toman about the poet Jiri Daniel, born Frantisek Schulmann in 1916 in Liban, Bohemia, where his father was manager of a sugar refinery. He studied in Prague at high school and at the medical faculty. There he also started to publish his poems, which were influenced by R.M.Rilke and by the Czech poet Halas. The whole Schulmann family - his parents, wife and small daughter - remained in ghetto Terezin until the liberation thanks to the father being a specialist in the manufacture of ink. But Jiri Daniel himself was deported in autumn 1944 to Birkenau and from there to Glogau in Germany. His last known station was Bergen-Belsen. "Torst" are going to publish in the near future a monograph about the poet, with his poems and diaries, including also the biography Toman is working on for years now.

## **"Aktion Suehnezeichen"**

which is engaged in the service of peace and of reconciliation between Germans and Jews, printed in its publication (issue of September 1997) a contribution "Ist meine Heimat der Ghetto wall?" (Is the Ghetto Rampart my Home Country?). It deals with a book about the children's newspaper "Vedem" and about the children who put it out. The book was published in Czech and in an English translation.

In the issue of December 1997 is an article "Wider das Vergessen" (Against Forgetting) about the visit of a group from Dresden in Terezin. In the archives of "Pamatnik Terezin" the members of the group showed interest in the fate of the Jews of their town, from which 10 transports arrived in the ghetto. They got explanations by Michaela Vidlakova (nee Lauscherova), who arrived in the ghetto aged six.

## **INFORMATION REQUESTED**

### **Unknown Identity**

It sounds like a film: A man was raised in Turkey a Muslim, emigrated to the USA and only last year, at the age of 55, his adoptive father told him on his deathbed, that he is originally a Jew, the son of Holocaust survivors from Czechoslovakia.

The few facts known to him: his grandfather Michael Meisel was killed by the Gestapo in 1940 in Prague after a fight with a Nazi band. The fate of his grandmother Elisabeth is not known. At the time of the transports his father Ascher Ehud Meisel, born 1927, went "underground" and survived in Czechoslovakia. He married Miriam (surname unknown, her parents were David and Sarah), the couple lived in Prague, where Ascher Ehud was a journalist. As the situation worsened after the Communist takeover the two escaped in 1952 from Czechoslovakia to Turkey. There they approached the Israeli embassy, wanting to emigrate to Israel. In Turkey a son was born to them, but shortly afterwards the couple was involved in an accident (details unknown) and both died. Before she died Miriam gave her one month old son to a mission, together with some family keepsakes, among them a yellow star. The baby was adopted by a Turkish family and raised as their son.

Now the man is trying to find out his real identity and to contact people who knew his parents or other members of the family. Even the smallest bit of information could help. Please write to Beit Terezin.

\*

Vera Hajkova

from Prague is looking for traces of siblings who were in the home for small children in ghetto Terezin: Brigitte Schaffer, born September 12, 1938 and Adolf Schaffer, born January 16, 1941, both were liberated in Terezin. Does anybody know of their fate and present address? Please write to Beit Terezin.

\*

Pia Kristina Garde

from Stockholm is working on a paper about Holocaust survivors, who after the liberation arrived in Sweden. In this connection she found a testimony (written in German) about a group of some 30 children, with whom the witness lived in special barracks in Auschwitz and about the selections carried out every few days among the children by Dr. Mengele. They knew what awaited them and before they went to their death some of them scratched into the wooden boards of their bunks short messages like: "Here lived Jiri Weiss, aged 11" and "I know that I am going to die tomorrow, L.H., 14 years old".

By mistake somebody wrote on the testimony another name, not that of the witness. Does anybody know the identity of the witness? Everything seems to indicate that the testimony is about the children's barracks in the main camp of Auschwitz - not the one in the Birkenau family camp. Please write to Beit Terezin or directly to:

Pia Kristina Garde, Kungstensgatan 26, 113 57 Stockholm, Sweden

\*

### **For a Biography of Madelein Albright**

Michael Dobbs looks for Holocaust survivors with information about the following persons:

Olga Koerbel

born 1878

transport AAv to Theresienstadt, Et to Auschwitz

Arnost Koerbel

born 1878

as above

Milena Deiml

born 1932

transport Cd to Theresienstadt, Et to Auschwitz

Dr. Rudolf Deiml

born 1889

transport Cd to Theresienstadt, Ek to Auschwitz

Margarete Deiml

born 1903

transport Cd to Theresienstadt, Et to Auschwitz

Jiri Barbier

born 1909

transport Ci to Theresienstadt, Ek to Auschwitz

Ruzena Spiegel

born 1887

transport AAC to Theresienstadt, AAK to Trawniky

Further M. Dobbs wants to contact people who lived in the ghetto at L-304. Please write to:

Michael Dobbs, 8003 Overhill Rd., Bethesda Md. 20814, USA

[mdobbs@erols.com](mailto:mdobbs@erols.com)

\*

### Reader's Letter

Hana Bruml from Arlington, USA, wrote to us regarding our item "Last Testimony" (newsletter issue No. 43, July 1997) about the fate of Hana Kleinova in the camp Sackisch-Kudowa, where she arrived with a group of women from Terezin after the selection in Birkenau in autumn 1944, and adds:

My friend Hanka was sick and her condition deteriorated constantly. I volunteered to nurse her in the belief, that it was typhus - I was not afraid to catch it, since I had nursed children with this disease in Terezin. She died on December 19, 1944. We were surprised to learn, that the camp commander had ordered a coffin - that never happened before. We laid Hanka into the simple wooden coffin and since we did not have anything else, we lined it with old newspapers. I washed her after her death - the only honor I could do her.

\* \* \*

Only the membership fees and contributions enable us to continue with the many activities we have reported in this newsletter. Our membership fees are unchanged:

	Israel	Abroad
Singles	NIS 70.-	US \$ 40.-
Couples	NIS 100.-	US \$ 60.-
2. Generation - Singles	NIS 40.-	
2. Generation - Couples	NIS 60.-	