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FROM PAST TO FUTURE - IMPRESSIONS FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING

Our annual meeting was held on May 8, 1999 at Givat Hayim-Ihud. Some 250 participants were present - from the first, second and third generation. During the first part Dr. Nili Keren from the kibbutz seminary gave a lecture about excursions of youth groups to Eastern Europe. She touched the history of these excursions and asked a few important questions: do the trips fulfill their aims? Are there problems regarding the Israeli identity of the young generation, based on the Holocaust experience? Is the meeting of Israeli youth with Diaspora youth positive? How can the tension between a didactic excursion and an eventful trip be bridged? Dr. Keren also talked about the itineraries and she concluded, that they should be more controlled and adapted specifically to each group.

Then there was the official annual meeting, during which the new steering committee was elected (see the following article) and also the chairpersons of the various committees: Narda Kuczinski - education, Shosh Sade - events, Nir Drori - finances, Alisa Sheck - exhibitions and Arie Brodavka - comptroller.

Anna Lorencova from Prague, who was present at the meeting, read a Czech letter from the chairperson of Terezinska iniciativa Dana Lieblová, who greeted the assembly in the name of her association. She mentioned the late Zeev Sheck from Israel and the late Jiri Lauscher and others from the Czech Republic, who were among the first to supply Beit Terezin with material for its collection. She also expressed her satisfaction regarding the excellent contacts between the two sister associations in the Czech Republic and in Israel.

Ronit Fischl-Tieberg was nominated as legal adviser of the association, Anita Tarsi manageress of Beit Terezin and Bilha Rubin her deputy.

The meeting concluded with a performance of Kobi Lurie's "L'haye Hahayim" (Long Live Life), consisting of chansons from cabarets in ghetto Terezin for an audience of some 400 people. (See separate item).

New Chairman of our Association is a Member of the Second Generation

Dear readers,

at the last annual meeting I was elected chairman of the association.

As a member of the second generation (son of Otto-Nahum Loewenthal) I hope to succeed to further the activities of the association and to strengthen it so as to safeguard its important and special functions for many years to come.

Since a majority of our members do not know me personally I would like to introduce myself. For 22 years now I am married to Zehava. We have 3 children

(a 19-year old daughter in the army, a son aged 16 in high school and a 10-year old in elementary school. I am a doctor of social sciences with a second diploma in philosophy. I have also academic titles in political science and administration. For the last 18 years I have been managing the Haifa center for the treatment for drug addicts, which belongs to the “Rambam” hospital. I am also a member of the faculty for health and welfare at Haifa university.

As you surely know, Beit Terezin is just now being renovated and we hope to finish this project shortly.

The renovation was necessary to enable us to deepen and broaden our activities. I see my main task in continuing the expansion of our base, which is the foundation of the many-faceted voluntary work done in Beit Terezin. This task will require the mobilization of finances and we hope to succeed in that.

Finally I would like to thank in the name of all members of our association our outgoing chairman Mordechai (Maxi) Livni for his manifold activities for Beit Theresienstadt. His focused, creative and

forward looking thinking started many developments, which - we hope - will ensure our activity for years to come. Maxi promised to continue his help in the future, too. We thank him and are sure of his future cooperation.

Eli Lawental

Special Event on Holocaust Day at Beit Terezin

A special event was held this year on Holocaust day in Beit Terezin, in cooperation with the district committee of Emek Hefer: Beit Terezin was open to the broad public of the first, second and third generation. “The needs of the survivors were the main consideration for this day” said the manageress of Beit Theresienstadt Anita Tarsi, “each commemorated in his own way - meeting with friends, candle-lighting or filling out testimony forms. We learned that many survivors are overwhelmed on Holocaust day by the media and various ceremonies and so often feel lonelier than on any other day. That is why we decided to have a kind of anti-ceremony, a day enabling the survivor to be with his companions in fate without feeling any obligation or threat”.

During this open day held from 9 a.m. until noon the guests were invited to the kibbutz club room. There were group discussions while light refreshments (contributed by neighboring villages) were served. Pupils of the Shafririm school from Givat Hayim-Ihud helped with the organization and took part in the discussions, too. There was also an exhibition titled “Remembrance and Memory”, where works by artists from our association and from the vicinity were shown - pictures, sculpture, books, verse etc.

About 100 persons participated “and though we had some misgivings of this new concept - the reactions were warm and very positive”, said Anita, “next year we will again hold such an event”.

Renovation at Beit Terezin

Planning a new house - you think about the area, the needs and the financial means of the customer. You chose an architect and a builder and work starts. Renovating makes things more complicated, there are many surprises, coming to light only when you start tearing down old parts. So it was here, too. After receiving all the necessary permits to be recognized by the official museum

authority e.g. insurance, fire and burglary alarms, lighting, air conditioning, humidity control, conservation etc. - at the last moment further demands were added, which delayed the work by another few days.

The tendency was, to retain the basic plan by our late member Albin Glaser and to adapt the new planning to the existing adjoining buildings. The area of the exhibition room is quite small - 75 sq.m. We wanted the room to fulfill several functions: exhibitions, video- and music corner, computer equipment and lectures. All this had to fit in with the demands by the museum authority and be an inviting aesthetic solution. We engaged two architects, who understood our needs perfectly and made every effort to elastically comply with our often changing requirements.

For now the situation is as follows: walls are erected, windows were walled in and others opened up, the floor tiles are in place, the construction is ready and the infrastructure for all electrical and electronic equipment was prepared. In general the pace is all right, we make every effort (much of it thanks to Anita's bargaining talents) to stay within our budget - but we will still need further contributions for the furnishing and other additional features. The work should be finished by mid-August.

OUR EDUCATIONAL CENTER

Study Days at Beit Terezin January - July 1999

From January to July of this year there were 100 study days in Beit Terezin, an increase of 20% against last year. The participants were high school students, teachers, youth groups prior to their trips to Poland and the Czech Republic, groups from abroad (mostly from Germany).

In a number of schools we also carried out a new project titled "To be in Terezin" - using the Internet for teaching the subject. In all we had thousands of students.

Currently we are able to accommodate only one class per day, both because of lack of space and of teaching personnel. Most study days are given by Bilha Rubin and Anita Tarsi, occasionally Sima Shahar is helping out. The majority of high school students face the Holocaust as a subject of study for the first time in Beit Terezin. Often they arrive with unclear knowledge and some fears toward this emotion-laden subject. They heard about Auschwitz and Poland, but few know, that the Holocaust took place all over Europe. The word Theresienstadt sounds strange - they never heard about it.

They are adolescents, when revolt and resistance are central factors of their young personality. And it is hard for them to identify with helplessness and non-violent resistance.

Description of everyday life of youth their age in the ghetto helps them to understand. Factual knowledge enables them to confront the subject earnestly.

Typical study days consist of 4 parts:

A lecture on ghetto Terezin in the framework of the "final solution" and a film about Czech Jewry.

A workshop to acquaint the youth with day-to-day life in the ghetto.

The oral testimony of a survivor.

A summary of the study day.

The testimony is naturally the most important part - it is given by members of

our first generation who again and again make the effort, though it gets harder with time. It is a mental and physical effort. On this occasion we want again to express our appreciation for their unceasing devotion. Without the personal testimony the study days would be entirely different.

In spite of the painful subject the study days are both an instructive and an emotional experience. The youth leave us changed in a way.

After the study day each pupil chooses a theme from those offered by Beit Theresienstadt for a comprehensive paper, to be presented at school.

“To be in Terezin”

350 pupils from various Isr. schools took part in this project, carried out together with the Center for Educational Technology. It ran for 3 months as a computer-based learning program.

The project was received with much interest and was concluded with an emotional meeting of the students (9th grade) and their teachers. A children’s choir from Even Yehuda under the baton of Michael Glusman performed songs originating in the ghetto.

The participants wrote 60 group summaries. They had learned to define research subjects and questions from ghetto life and prepared some very interesting papers. “Living in Ghetto Terezin - how did the Jews cope with overcrowding and how did it influence them?”, “What effect had the ever-present death on the ghetto inmates?”, “How was life in the children’s homes and how did it influence the will to live?”, Why was youth in the ghetto given preferential food rations and what were the consequences?”, What characterized the relationship between youth and the old people in the ghetto and how did that influence the young people?”, How did the Jewish ghetto leadership - after receiving their orders from the Nazis - decide, whom to include in the transports to the East?”

These are some of the problems dealt with by the students in the framework of the project. The results show, that studying with the help of a computer, backed by teachers and specialists from Beit Terezin and from the Center for Educational Technology is quite successful.

Next year we plan to continue the project, a few schools already registered. Our special thanks to the Center, to the virtual teachers Abigail Oren and Tsvia Lotan and the form teachers - the project could not be carried out without them. The teaching program “To be in Terezin” was introduced this year at a symposium “Education 2000” at the Beit Berl college and at the annual meeting “Computers and Education”. In the coming weeks it will be also shown at a meeting about Jewish education organized by the Jewish Agency and in October at another meeting “Education and Holocaust” at Yad Vashem. Two research papers deal with the various aspects of the influence of the teaching of history and Holocaust with the aid of computers.

The program may be accessed on the Internet: -www.cet.ac.il/history/terezin

OUR EDUCATIONAL CENTER - FUTURE PROJECTS

Guide for Ghetto Terezin

The guide will be published shortly by Beit Terezin in cooperation with the Youth Department of the Ministry of Education. It deals with various sites in Terezin recalling the history of the ghetto - arranged according to subjects. In addition to text there are also pictures and maps. The basic idea is to help the visitor to the former ghetto and especially youth groups to orient themselves and to understand the characteristic of this ghetto. A group of teachers used the first draft of the guide and their remarks served to amend the final version. The booklet was edited by Dr. Yael Bernholz, Chava Funu and Israel Kretzner from the Ministry of Education and Dr. Yehuda Huppert, Hanka Drori and Anita Tarsi from Beit Terezin. The graphics are by Orni Drori. (Available soon in Beit Terezin, in Hebrew).

Terezin Music for Young Performers

The organization Jeunesses Musicales from Germany, in cooperation with Beit Terezin, plans for the coming autumn a musical seminar and master classes for chamber music, piano and vocalists, mainly works by composers from ghetto Theresienstadt. The first part will be held from October 22. - 24. in Berlin, in the house of the "Wannsee conference". Among the teachers are also artists from ghetto Terezin: the pianist Prof. Edith Kraus Blody (Jerusalem) and the violinist Prof. Paul Kling (Victoria, Canada), also the opera singer and voice teacher Prof. Emily Berendsen, who has already performed many songs from the ghetto, the musicologist and internationally known specialist for music and artists from Terezin Prof. David Bloch (Tel Aviv university) and the well-known pianist Prof. Konrad Richter. The project will be led by the director of the conservatory in Schwerin (Germany) the pianist Volker Ahmels - who has done very much for the dissemination of Theresienstadt music - and the manageress of Beit Terezin Anita Tarsi.

The seminar will be attended by 28 talented young musicians from Germany and Israel. This second part of the seminar will be held in Beit Terezin on October 25. - 29. with logistic support by the district committee (Yonat Keller) and by kibbutz Givat Hayim-Ihud (Esti Biran).

The conclusion of the seminar will be a concert played by the participants. Our members are invited - details will be mailed (non-members by request).

First International Workshop in Beit Theresienstadt

Beit Terezin plans to hold an international workshop together with "Pro-Israel Encounter Programs" on the subjects of Holocaust in education, research, documentation and social projects. The workshop will take place from March 26th to March 30th 2000. The basic idea is to have a dialogue about the difficulties encountered by professionals dealing with the Holocaust.

Some examples: influence of the Holocaust on various ideologies; teaching itineraries and their realization; sites of remembrance; thoughts of the second and third generation about the contents in Holocaust-museums and more. The themes will be dealt with taking into account the background and associations of the participants.

The workshop will be held in English. The site: Beit Terezin in Givat Hayim-Ihud. Guests from abroad will be accommodated in this kibbutz or neighboring settlements.

Interested persons, contact please tel. ++972-6-6369515 or fax ++971-6-6369793. Please give full name, the organization or project you are associated with, your work and areas of interest. Persons from abroad, please give details about former visits to Israel and if a tour is desired.

Yad Vashem Computerizes Names of Holocaust Victims

In February and March 1999 about 1000 people - clerical staff, language experts and others worked almost without interruption to enter the names of 3 millions Holocaust victims into the data bank of Yad Vashem. This project began in 1992 and since then about one million names were entered. But the signing of the restitution settlement with the Swiss banks brought an acceleration: the banks and Jewish organizations budgeted the sum of \$ 8 million for the project on condition, that it will be finished in some weeks and the lists handed over to the Swiss banks. The Isr. company "Tadiran Information Systems" took over the project. "Manpower" mobilized hundreds of typists and Yad Vashem organized a special course. "We wanted them not to work mechanically, but to be aware of the fact, that this is a national project which deals with murdered people" said the head of "Manpower" Erna Segal to the newspaper "Haaretz". The computerization will enable all to get full information about names and other details of the victims - through the Internet, too. Yad Vashem hopes to finish the project in 1999.

News from the Terezin Music Memorial Project

The director of TMMP Prof. David Bloch informed us, that the British publishers Boosey & Hawkes, who specialize in music, decided to publish some 60 musical works composed in ghetto Terezin in the years 1941 - 1945. These include chamber music by Frantisek Domazlicky, Egon Ledec, Viktor Kohn, Jiri Kummerman, Zikmund Schul, Hugo Loewenthal and Robert Dauber; cabaret songs by Karel Schwenk, Martin Roman, Adolf Strauss, Ewald Weiss; songs by Zikmund Schul, Carlo Taube and Ilse Weber; liturgical pieces by David Gruenfeld, Vilem Zrzavy; choral works by Frantisek Domazlicky, Zikmund Schul, Gideon Klein and Victor Ullmann; piano pieces by Zikmund Schul and Viktor Ullmann; and an instrumental ensemble version of the introduction to Franz Eugen Klein's "Der glaeserne Berg". This edition, produced jointly with Yad Vashem, is eagerly awaited by musicians and musicologists the world over. "Gema Stiftung", the foundation of the German music copyright organization which has contributed already in the past to the TMMP, is ready to finance the project of the musicologist and pianist and composer James Simon. James Simon, born 1880 in Berlin, who was murdered in 1944 in Auschwitz composed dozens of works - piano, chamber- and orchestral music, Lieder, the cantata "Ein Pilgermorgen" and the opera "Frau im Stein". The "Gema" grant will make it possible to publish many of the unpublished works by Simon, including string quartets, sextet for piano, solo for piano and more. One of Simon's most moving works is "Lamento" for cello and piano, written in 1938 during a visit in Palestine, where he learned about his sister's death.

Our association contributes to the TMMP too, through an annual financial subvention.

ACTUALITIES

The Visit of the Delegation of the Intern. Red Cross in Theresienstadt

A video film was shown in the home of the First Secretary of the Swiss embassy in Israel Ms Natalie Boesch on February 2, 1999. The film depicts Dr. Maurice Russel, who was interviewed in 1975 by Claude Lanzmann. Dr. Russel led the delegation of the Intern. Red Cross, which visited ghetto Terezin in 1944. The Swiss ambassador in Israel and officers of the Intern. Red Cross in Israel and in the Palestine Authority were present.

Surprisingly Dr. Russel did not change his views since he wrote his report after the visit in the ghetto. Even many years later he saw Theresienstadt as a VIP ghetto, where Jews lived in good conditions. Anita Tarsi invited the head of the commission of the Intern. Red Cross in Israel Mr. Alain Aeschlimann to our annual meeting in Beit Terezin.

On this occasion Mr. Aeschlimann - in the name of the Intern. Red Cross - asked for forgiveness for the blindness of the delegation which visited the ghetto. He underscored, that such a deception could not be repeated today: learning from the past, Red Cross delegates request today at visits in penitentiaries or detention camps to speak to inmates without the presence of guards or other camp personnel.

Mr. Aeschlimann sent us a thank you note for the books about the history of the ghetto which we gave him. "Representing the Intern. Red Cross in Israel I feel a special duty and connection to the Theresienstadt episode. Reading the books, where the innocent victims are brought to life, is one of the ways to learn the facts as they were and to get to know the despicable baseness those criminals reached" Mr. Aeschlimann wrote.

Echoes to the Performance "L'haye Hahayim"

This cabaret premiered on January 12, 1999 at Yad Vashem. It consists of chansons and scenes from ghetto Terezin from the years 1942 - 1944, translated into Hebrew. It shows the ghetto and day-to-day life there from a cynical and humorous viewpoint. The title is taken from one of the performances by Karel Schwenk, who initiated many of the cabaret programs in the ghetto. The original texts were written in Czech and in German by Petr Kien, Karel Schwenk, Frieda Rosenthal and others. Some of the music is the original one, other pieces were composed anew.

The cabaret had a trial performance at the theater festival in Akko in autumn of 1998 and was received very well. Kobi Lurie produced the show after 4 years of preparation and study, Israel Gurion staged it, music arranged by Hanna Hacoen. Actors: Tal Amir, Israel Treistmann and Lilach Kaspi.

"And so, subtly, one of the deeper philosophical performances of the Israeli stage is acted out in front of us" writes the critic of the newspaper "Kol Hair", "the longer you take part - with mixed feelings - , the harder it is to escape the thoughts about the extreme theatrical reality of those times and to compare it to the present one. Must be seen!"

At our annual meeting in May 1999 the performance was given again. The second Israeli TV channel broadcast a deeply felt reportage about the experiences of two women, who were well acquainted with the world of musical cabaret in ghetto Theresienstadt: Margit Silberfeld (Jerusalem) who knew Karel Schwenk and performed in the ghetto in Verdi's Requiem and Manka Alter (Beit Yitzhak), who also took part in ghetto performances. Manka and Margit reconstructed for the interviewer Dov Gilhar scenes from meetings with Karel Schwenk and talked about his music, humor and feelings. The reportage included also a clip from a Nazi propaganda film, where Schwenk appears.

Concert in Beit Theresienstadt

The director of the Johann Wilhelm Hartl conservatory in Schwerin, Germany, the pianist Volker Ahmels visited Beit Terezin last May - like so often in recent years. He was accompanied by the pianist Friederike Haufe. They gave a concert with compositions by Theresienstadt composers murdered in Auschwitz - Pavel Haas and Viktor Ullmann and also played works by Schubert and Mozart.

The guests were welcomed by our former chairman M. Livni and by Shosh Sade (second generation).

Hebrew Version of Bedrich Fritta's "Tommy" for Ms Reuma Weizmann

The slim volume created by the Jewish Czech painter and caricaturist Bedrich Fritta as a birthday present for his son Tommy was published in April 1999 by Yad Vashem in Hebrew. It was edited and translated by Thomas Fritta and Eva Tolkowski. (German and Dutch translations were printed years ago). The Prague-born Fritta worked in the ghetto in the technical department - he drew the booklet for the third birthday of his son Tommy on January 22, 1942. "It is a collection of sweet but not too sugary drawings, where Tommy is shown in various moods known to every child" writes the critic Ariana Melamed, "the artist's talent has weathered time and the change of tastes very well".

At the end of the book Fritta addresses his son: "This is the first in a long row of books I want to draw for you!" - Fritta was murdered in Auschwitz, his wife Hansi in the "Small Fortress" in Terezin. The now 60 year old Tommy, by profession librarian, survived and was adopted by the painter Leo Haas and his wife Erna. He lives in Germany and in the Czech Republic.

On the occasion of the publication of the Hebrew version of the book Thomas Fritta visited Israel last June. Together with the director of Yad Vashem Avner Shalev he presented a copy to Reuma Weizmann, wife of the president.

Jan Masaryk - In Memoriam

" On March 10, was the 51st anniversary of the tragic death of Jan Masaryk. He was a loyal friend of the Jewish people and of Israel. His many-sided help to Jewish affairs was given not only during his stint as the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czechoslovak government in exile in London in WWII, but also and specifically after his return to Prague, at war's end.

In London Masaryk was in contact with the Joint and was very interested in its activities. Immediately after the war these commenced in Czechoslovakia, too,

and I was nominated as General Secretary and deputy of the American director. The Joint gave help to many and especially to the refugees who had survived the Holocaust and were - after the pogrom in Poland - on their way to Palestine. This was made possible through the aid of Jan Masaryk, who ordered to open the borders for the refugees. In general we found understanding and help at the relevant offices, thanks to Masaryk's influence.

After the Communist overthrow in February 1948 the situation worsened and the director of the Joint asked me, to make an appointment with Jan Masaryk to clear up the matter. I contacted his office and he was immediately ready to meet us. We visited him in his office four or five days before his death.

He listened with understanding and admitted to being aware of the situation and promised his help, as far as possible. It was a pleasant and friendly conversation with an optimistic and humorous person. Before we left him he asked us to give his regards to the manager of the Joint in New York Mr. A. Warburg and added, that we may always apply to him, when necessary.

In my wildest dreams I did not imagine, that a week later I would be laying a wreath at the graveside of this great humanist, in the name of the World Zionist Organization. Blessed be his memory!"

Dr. Abraham, Dolfa Benes

Eva Erben's Book - Performance and Meeting

On the occasion of a memorial ceremony held on Holocaust day at the Nili-school in Zihron Yaakov the pupils performed a dramatization of Eva Erben's book "I was Left Behind". "The children, who had read the book, identified very much with Eva's story" related the teacher Irit Bloch who organized the ceremony, "you succeeded to mobilize the strength to pass on your personal experiences to the young generation - and the obligation not to forget."

Some 600 children saw the play, which was performed a second time in the evening for grown-ups. After the ceremony the children with their families saw a video film about ghetto Terezin.

Following the publication of her autobiographical book in its German version Eva Erben (Ashkalon) read from it in November 1998 to a number of youth groups at various localities in Germany.

In the local newspapers of Volkach, Kitzingen and other places, where Eva talked about her experiences as a girl in the Holocaust and answered questions from the young audience, essays about her and children in the ghetto appeared.

Back to the Past

Ruth Bachrich, Susi Weiss, Ruth Kemeny and Dita Kraus from Israel were invited to Hamburg, Germany, in June 1999. There they had worked from July 1944 until April 1945, mainly clearing rubble after the heavy bombings of the town by the allied air forces and also building shelters for the evacuated population. The visit was initiated by Karl-Heinz Schulz and his wife Karen. The couple is taking care of the sites in Hamburg, where Jewish women prisoners worked under inhuman conditions, for years now and collecting documentation, too. Dita Kraus wrote down her impressions for Beit Terezin - it was her first visit to Germany since the liberation. Together with the Israelis two former prisoners from the Czech Republic were there - Dana Lieblova and Margit

Hermanova. It was a return to the past, to the former tobacco sheds at the Dessauer Ufer of Hamburg port, where the prisoners from Auschwitz were brought. This was the site of the Neugraben camp, where they lived for 6 months. Today there are lawns, where the inhabitants of the garden city stroll with their dogs. A memorial tablet there was vandalized 4 times and finally transferred to a safer location in the center of town. The last stop of the visitors was the memorial site at Bergen-Belsen, the awful place the prisoners were led to in April 1945. Now there are parks and tombstones with inscriptions like: 2000 dead, 5000 dead. Dita Kraus noted in her report the names of many people who hosted the group, took care of them, financed the visit, organized meetings with the local population and students - and built a bridge to make the trip into the painful past possible.

Prizes for Works About Ghetto Theresienstadt

Prizes for outstanding art and literary works on the subject of ghetto Terezin were bestowed in Kolin (Central Bohemia) by a foundation initiated by Hanna Greenfield, who survived the ghetto. Further a memorial ceremony was held in Kolin in June 1999 for the transport of June 1942 - deported by the Nazis as a reaction to the assassination of Heydrich. Out of the 1050 Jews 50 were left in Terezin, the rest sent to Poland.

Holocaust in Jewish History

An international meeting on this subject was held in Yad Vashem in Jerusalem from January 4th to January 9th 1999. Among the many lecturers who illuminated the theme from various viewpoints was the head of the Intern. Institute for Holocaust Research at Yad Vashem Prof. Bauer. He summarized a comparison of reactions by Jews in different European countries in the Holocaust era versus the background of their general history.

Prof. Otto Dov Kulka spoke about "History and Awareness of History: Similarities and Differences in the History of Czech and German Jews under the Nazi Regime". Prof. Kulka who as a child was in ghetto Terezin and in the Birkenau family camp, cites Rabbi Leo Baeck from Berlin and the chairman of the Jewish community in Prag, Dr. Emil Kafka, who both foresaw the looming Jewish tragedy, before the physical destruction began.

Restoration of a Magnificent Past

The restored Spanish Synagogue in Prague was reopened in November 1998 in its full splendor. It stands on the site, where the "Old Schul" of the Jewish ghetto stood since the 12th century. The synagogue is in the South-Spanish style and was closed for more than 15 years because of its bad state. Now - more beautiful than ever - it serves as an exhibition room and concert hall. The glass cabinets along the walls of the huge hall display documents related to the history of the building and of Czech Jewry in the last 100 years, including the German occupation and ghetto Terezin.

In the former winter synagogue near the main hall an exhibition "100 Years Since the Hilsner Trial" was opened in June 1999. In this trial the Jewish shoemaker Leopold Hilsner from the small town Polna was falsely accused of

murdering the Christian girl Anezka Hrozova. He was sentenced to prison for life, but pardoned in 1918. One of the fighters for Hilsners innocence was Prof. T. G. Masaryk and the exhibition includes poison-pen letters he received for "selling his soul to the Jews".

Jewish Museum in Southwest Bohemia

On the Czech-German-Austrian border, in the village Dobra Voda, the house of Wilhelm Adler was restored. He was a Jewish trader, who lived there until 1932. The roots of his family in this place reach back to the 17th century - one Jewish family among the 60 families living in the village. After the fall of the Communist regime the grandsons of W. Adler Matityahu and Rabbi Sinai who live in Israel, decided to restore the house and to remake it into a memorial for their parents. These were deported in March 1943 to ghetto Theresienstadt and in May 1944 to the Birkenau family camp, where they were gassed. The Plzen National Museum in cooperation with the Jewish Museum in Prague and with the Jewish community adopted this initiative and helped to develop the site.

The museum was opened in July 1997. It includes an exhibition reconstructing Jewish life in villages and small towns. Furthermore there is information about over 100 Jewish communities of Southern and Western Bohemia destroyed in the Holocaust.

The place can be reached by a bus of the Prague Jewish community (\$ 125.- for 8 passengers). The tour may be combined with a visit to Karlove Vary (Karlsbad) and to a beautiful nature park in the vicinity. (Contact Mr. Cork, phone 0339-411221, at 7 a.m.) There is also once daily a bus from Prague to Susice and from there there is frequent connection to Dobra Voda. Overnight accommodation: hotel U Luhanu in the nearby town Petrovice, phone 0187-588193.

EXHIBITIONS

"Not a Day Without a Line"

An exhibition of drawings by Willy Groag (kibbutz Maanit) and by his late parents Trude and Emo was opened in April 1999 at the Moreshet gallery, Givat Haviva. The exhibition displays drawings and sculptures created during and after WWII.

Nira Rosso writes in the newspaper "Haaretz" about the absurdity of the pictures in contrast to the circumstances in which they were created - the lilies and roses by Trude, Willy's violets, drawn in the ghetto. Or "The Last Station" by Willy showing old people in the ghetto infirmary - "women of skin and bones in bourgeois bed-linen, eiderdown and thick feather pillows."

"Were it only the story of 3 survivors, I would not have mounted the exhibition" said the curator Yuval Danieli, "but because of the outstanding talent of all three artists the exhibition is fully justified."

Nira Rosso also mentions, how Willy rescued children's drawings from the ghetto by smuggling them in suitcases to Prague - the drawings are today well known all over the world.

In a short biography (deposited in our archives) Willy wrote about his parent's home where they and the three children lived and about the creative atmosphere there - the philanthropic and very active mother with talents in writing and

painting and an adored father, who told captivating stories, played music, joked - and painted.

“The parents had an outstanding understanding of children” Willy remembers and describes outings, the original punishments (“the wallboard” where the sinner’s bad deeds were written in verse and which was hung over his bed), the illustrated booklets given by members of the family to each other for birthdays or other occasions.

In July 1942 all family members (except those who emigrated in time) were deported to ghetto Terezin - together with Madla, Willy’s young wife. Their daughter Hava was born in the ghetto. The grandmother with her son, Trude’s brother, were murdered in Treblinka. Trude, Emo, Willy, Madla and the baby survived and came to Israel. Madla died shortly afterwards. Willy was one of the founders of the “Galam” factory at kibbutz Maanit.

Emo Groag died 1961, Trude continued to lead a rich and active, creative life, she died 1979, aged 90.

Flowers with Roots in the Ghetto

Watercolors by Dita Kraus (Netanya) were shown in an exhibition titled “As a Wildflower” at the “Studio” gallery in Netanya from July 4th until July 7th 1999. Dita started drawing as a child in ghetto Theresienstadt, taught by the artist Friedl Dicker-Brandeis. She finds her inspiration mainly in wildflowers and paints them very realistically - but with an artistic eye. The exhibition was received with much interest, mainly among her friends from the ghetto and among Netanya citizens.

Pages from Life

Works by Hava Pressburger (nee Ginz) which include pages from her ghetto diary were shown at the ghetto museum in Terezin (Czech Republic) from February to April 1999. Hava’s works are special - she makes her own paper, consisting mainly of Negev plants. She lives in Omer near Beer Sheba.

The 14 years old Hava Ginz wrote her diary in the years 1944-45. As daughter of a Jewish father and a gentile mother she was in the ghetto without her parents. Together with her was her brother Petr, the talented editor of the children’s newspaper “Vedem”, who perished in the Holocaust.

Photographic Exhibition: “Holocaust Survivors ...Today”

An exhibition of photographs by the artist Jean Pierre Boesch was shown last May at the Tel Aviv cinematheque under the above title.

The exhibition (under the patronage of the Swiss embassy) shows portraits of Holocaust survivors, with short biographies and texts, some related to the Holocaust and others, “epilogues” from the present.

“Working women and men, who are again able to smile, feel good at home and lead a normal life - it is almost banal. But this phenomenon is paradoxical and not at all natural” the artist Boesch writes, “it represents the victory of human dignity and the will to live - often gained after a hard struggle.”

Among the pictures are a few of our members: Magda Barnea and her late husband Dov, Ruth and Kurt Elias and Eva Lukesch.

Dov Barnea wrote in his “epilogue”: “Since I came to Israel I felt the absolute need to dedicate myself fully to education, to eradicate my past - and to make people again believe in human beings.”

“Within the Walls” - Exhibition in the Sidney Jewish Museum

In December 1998 the Sidney Jewish Museum, Australia, mounted this exhibition on ghetto Theresienstadt. There are various exhibits - diaries, documents, paintings and pictures from the ghetto and also a propaganda film made by the Nazis in the ghetto. Oral testimonies from former ghetto inmates living in Australia are included, too.

The program of the exhibition says, that it aims to depict the mental and spiritual power of resistance - in the face of hopelessness.

“The Art of Survival” - Drawings by Helga Weissova

The weekly “Time” published at the end of 1998 an item about an exhibition by Helga Weissova - some 100 drawings depicting life in the ghetto from the viewpoint of a little girl. Helga (69) who today lives in Prague, was 12 years old when her father Otto told her: “Draw everything you see”. For 3 years the girl drew colorful and happy pictures of life in the ghetto - standing in line during food distribution, rummaging in garbage, hunting for lice. After her liberation in Auschwitz she created other pictures - grown up, sad and oppressive, of situations in the concentration camp.

The “Time” article analyzes Helga’s art, originally meant to distract her thoughts from the daily horrors, which became very valuable historic documents. “I hope, that I gave a convincing and indisputable testimony about those times” Helga Weissova said, “so that such can never happen again”.

Visitors and Guests in Beit Theresienstadt

? On February 21, 1999 the head of “Initiative Hans Krasa” from Germany Ms Gabi Flatow visited us. Her organization’s aim is the conservation of Theresienstadt music. Ms Flatow used her visit in Beit Terezin for research in our archives. She brought us material and CDs from a festive concert of Verdi’s Requiem, played in the Terezin “Small Fortress” in memory of the murdered ghetto artists. A concert was scheduled to take place on December 5, 1999 (Hanukka) at Beit Terezin.

? In February Beit Terezin was also visited by the deputy of the Czech Minister of Justice JUDr. Pavel Rychetsky with a delegation from his ministry. The visit was initiated by the Czech embassy in Israel. Future cooperation with Beit Terezin and Israel in general was agreed upon.

? In March 1999 the director of the Department of International Contacts of the Czech Ministry of Education and Sports Mr. Pavel Cink and his aide Marie Voborilova were our guests. They were accompanied by Hava Fono from the Youth Department of the Isr. Ministry of Education. The guests were guided by our member Miriam Cervenka. They discussed didactic viewpoints of Holocaust teaching with the team of Beit Terezin and stressed the continuing cooperation with the Isr. Ministry of Education regarding this subject. After the visit we received a thank you note by the deputy director of the Ministry of Education

and the head of its Youth Department Avraham O. Cohen, who expressed his appreciation for our warm reception of the guests.

? The head of the Museum Department of the Ministry of Education Yehuda Levi Aldema and the departmental museum consultant Gioia Feruggi Shtulman visited Beit Terezin following our request for official recognition as a museum. The visitors were impressed and promised further cooperation.

? The referent for educational associations and boarding schools at the Ministry of Education Mr. Hagai Yehudai visited us during the renovation and was positively impressed.

? The coordinator of youth delegations to Poland and the Czech Republic of the "Amal" school network Eli Oz was our guest, to discuss new ideas for these excursions with our team. The intention is to add a visit in Terezin to the tour programs of the schools.

? Rabbi Norman Patz of Temple Sholom, Western Essex, Cedar Grove, New Jersey, who is Chairman of the Society for the History of Czechoslovak Jews visited Beit Terezin in July 1999. Possibilities of cooperation were discussed and, as a first step, Rabbi Patz will distribute our newsletter to the members of the Society.

? Ms Lonny Darwin, an active member of the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, visited us in July 1999. She was very interested in our art collection and the educational programs and will add Beit Theresienstadt to the Insiders Guide of Israel. The Guide is created and written by her and published by the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula and the Marin and Sonoma Counties.

OUR ARCHIVES

Mordechai Max Livni Writes About his Father Prof. Dr. Eugen Lieben

Our previous chairman M. Livni wrote a short biography of his father Prof. Dr. Eugen Lieben who was murdered in Auschwitz.

Prof. Lieben (1886-1944) was the scion of a Jewish family, going back for hundreds of years in Prague and in Bohemia. An outstanding student since his childhood, he studied philosophy, Greek and Latin at Charles University. "If I succeeded to pass on my world view to only hundred out of the many thousands of my students, I have multiplied myself by a hundred - no small achievement" he once said, when asked about his work as educator.

In 1918 he married Hanna (from Nuremberg) and - with their 3 sons - a warm family was created. He was strictly religious and in addition to that active in many civic and academic fields. After the Nazi occupation of Prague he was arrested and interrogated about his activity in the Jewish community, among others also by Adolf Eichmann.

Relieved of his teaching post at the high school, he organized - together with other educators - an alternative educational and tutorial framework for Jewish children. This functioned in small groups meeting in private apartments. He also continued to lecture to small audiences in his apartment.

The Liebens were among the last Jews from Prague deported to ghetto Theresienstadt - in July 1943. The two sons who were with their parents, were separated from them there and the parents from each other. Only later the sons managed to adapt an abandoned cellar room for the parents, who thus could live

together again. In spite of a lung disease Prof. Lieben continued his highly religious lifestyle. He also took part in the cultural life of the ghetto by continuing to give lectures.

On October 23, 1944 Hanna and Eugen Lieben were deported to Birkenau where they perished in the gas chambers. Most members of the wider family - mother, brothers, uncles and more were killed too, their oldest son managed to emigrate just in time in 1939 to then Palestine. The second son died in Kaufering camp. The youngest, Mordechai Livni, survived the camps, lives in Kiriat Tivon and is active in our association.

Death of Herzl's Contemporary

Jacobus Cahn (1872 - 1945), co-owner of the well known family bank Cahn & Lissa in Holland was one of the first Zionists in Herzl's time. He participated in the first Zionist congress in Basel (1897) and offered Herzl his professional services for the movement.

Cahn was an enthusiastic fighter for Herzl's political Zionism and managed the foundation for Jewish settlement (the later Anglo-Palestine bank), established in Jaffa. He was also the first Dutch consul in Jerusalem (1923 - 1927), but because of the failing health of his wife Anna Adriana they had to return to Holland.

There, in Den Haag, the Nazi occupation caught up with them. First they were driven out of their comfortable apartment, they moved from one place to another until, finally, they were deported to Westerbork camp. From there they were sent in September 1944 - with their loyal nurse - to ghetto Terezin. Jacobus Cahn died there after a month, his wife in April 1945.

Their grandson Itamar Arbel (Savyon), son of their daughter Lis (Alisa) who emigrated in time to Palestine, chose together with her 25 letters kept in the family (out of 165, from May 1940 until August 1947). They describe the tragedy the Cahns and their children lived through - 3 of the children perished in the Holocaust, too.

Itamar Arbel translated the letters from Dutch, German and English to Hebrew and published them in a small volume, which also includes the family tree and the last picture of his grandparents, wearing the yellow star, from 1940. The material was given to our archives.

Letters from Dita Reachova to Arnost Fisch - Moving Testimony of a Survivor

Daniela Raslavski (Ramat Gan) gave us a number of letters addressed to her father Arnost Fisch. He was imprisoned in ghetto Terezin and also in Kaufering. The letters were written by his wife Josephine who perished in Auschwitz and one letter from September 1945 is from his friend and former lover Dita Reachova. She was then 31 years old and was writing from a sanitarium for tuberculosis patients in Sweden, where she was sent after the liberation.

In her emotional letter she describes in detail her experiences in Auschwitz, digging ditches in Breslau, Silesia, the death march of 800 women from camp to camp shortly before the Russians arrived - finally to Bergen-Belsen where they were liberated by the British. She suffered from dysentery and typhus and weighed 32 kg.

"I was only a remnant of something, not human anymore" Dita wrote, "if the British would have come only a few days later, I would not be alive."

After liberation she was brought to a hospital in Stockholm, where tuberculosis was diagnosed. "A memento for life, recalling Bergen and the German overlords ... everything they did to us I suffered quietly, without uttering a sound, but full of raging hate. That helped me to survive and also the hope to see the Germans defeated".

"Do you know how much I long for Prague?" Dita writes toward the end of her letter, "there is a picture here of Hradcany and Charles bridge, when I look at it the tears are welling up ... how I envy you all strolling on Vaclavske namesti and Prikopy - when will I be able to do that?" Shortly afterwards Dita Reachova died in Sweden.

Predictable Death

Regina Van Son nee Ettinger, born 1880 in Hamburg, Germany, was deeply religious. In 1936, after the death of her husband Hugo, she was left in Nazi Germany all alone. "As a Mouse in the Trap" her son and granddaughters titled a series of letters from her, written 1938 - 1942. They are addressed to her two children and their families who managed to save themselves in time - her daughter Ilse, a physical education teacher, escaped through Holland to France (where she died 1956) and her son Manfred, who succeeded to reach England, where he lived until 1981.

Regina Van Son's letters show her full awareness of the fate of German Jewry: ("I will bless the day, when I take leave from my last child" she wrote to relatives, asking them to help her son Manfred) and resignation as to her own approaching death: ("I am taking my shroud with me" she writes in November 1941, awaiting deportation). The letters to her children, written shortly before she was deported with the rest of the town's Jews to Theresienstadt (July 1942), express her deep faith in God. They were told, that they were lucky, being sent to a neat, clean town bearing the name of Maria Theresia. In November 1942 Regina Van Son writes from the ghetto to a relative in Switzerland (and through her to her children), that she is in good health and mood. The next day she added: "Please send me something fast. Packages up to 4 kg may be sent". Four weeks later she died.

Her son, 3 granddaughters and their families live in Israel. They translated the letters from German into English and Hebrew and gave them to Beit Terezin.

Call for Help by a Raincoat Maker

Robert Green (USA) gave us 4 letters written by his relative Max Renner (Vienna 1891 - 1942, documenting movingly the plight of Jewish families in Bohemia at the start of the Nazi occupation. In the letters, written 1938 - 1939 the Prague raincoat maker Renner asks for help in the form of a guarantee from his American cousin and from colleagues - American manufacturers of raincoats - to receive an affidavit. He writes that he appeals as a colleague working for 30 years in this branch. In one of his letters he says that he is sure that the addressee is aware of the present situation of the Jews in Europe and especially in Czechoslovakia and requests a small loan to enable him to emigrate to the USA. He sent this letter to many raincoat makers, hoping that each of them would contribute a small sum to save a colleague and his family ... He intended to work in his profession ... and was sure to succeed. That was the only guarantee he could offer. "Be assured that I am no cadger" he wrote.

In another letter Renner writes about his family - his older daughter, married to a rabbinical student and the 13 year old Lia and begs "Please help me ... I hope that you won't let us drown..."

From our data base it appears that the family arrived in Terezin on May 15, 1942. Max and Vera were sent on to Lublin on May 17, 1942, the daughter Lia on October 1, 1944 to Auschwitz. All perished.

Postcards from Ilse Reines

Ilse Reines, who today lives in the Bronx, sent us a few postcards she wrote to her father in Terezin and one from her father in the ghetto, dated February 1, 1945. She adds the following story:

I lived with my father in Mannheim, Germany, my mother died from cancer in 1940. At a bombardment of Mannheim in 1943 our house was destroyed and we moved into a one-room apartment. On January 11, 1944 at 2 a.m. we heard loud knocks at the door. A Gestapo officer ordered my father to get up and accompany him. He was brought to the Kommandantur. In this building many Jews were concentrated and nobody knew where they were sent from there. That was the last time I saw my father. On May 20, 1945 - after the liberation - my father returned to Mannheim and was there in a hospital. At that time I worked for the US army in Heidelberg and the Mannheim authorities were hard put to find me.

My cousin Alfred Hoffmann, who somehow survived in Mannheim and visited my father in hospital, told him that I am alive, working in Heidelberg. They tried to contact me and succeeded finally at the end of 1945. A colleague of mine from the CID brought me to the Mannheim hospital. There I found my cousin who informed me, that my father had died a few hours earlier. Even in his last hours I could not be with him.

A further problem was his interment. Eventually a rabbi, a US army chaplain, was found, who arranged all necessary steps for a Jewish funeral. I always carry the family tree with me, but this notes only my father's German name Gustav Blum and I did not know his Hebrew one. The rabbi almost refused to carry out the ceremony, but in the end he called him "Israel" - as the Nazis had called all Jewish men. That was the last chapter of my father's sad life.

Farewell Letter to Werner Neufliess

Werner Neufliess (Shave Zion), a gardener in Theresienstadt, jokingly told his friends, that he planned to leave the ghetto on April 15, 1944 - which was obviously impossible. His comrades and coworkers (mainly the girls) decided to take leave of him and wrote him a moving farewell letter in the same humorous vein, which our archives received from Werner: "The day of leave taking has arrived and we part with a heavy heart. We thank you deeply for your patience and goodness during our joint work ... You were always an example for us, a good friend with fatherly advice and a wonderful teacher and instructor. You are leaving - but your spirit stays with us. Alas, we cannot leave with you, but we believe that the hour of freedom will arrive shortly and we hope that you will not forget our group in your new life (and will also not forget to send packages!)"
The letter was signed by 51 girls.

Louis Salomon and Family

Louis Salomon was born on April 17, 1872 in Schwerenz, Posen and arrived in ghetto Terezin on Dec. 16, 1942 from Berlin. In February 1945 he went by transport EW to Switzerland. His story:

He was a successful Berlin businessman, who supported his whole wider family. Some members of the family emigrated already in 1933 to then Palestine and settled at kibbutz Ein Harod. Those left in Germany lived in Spandau. At the time of the “night of the broken glass” (Kristallnacht) L. Salomon was chairman of the Jewish community. He managed to save a number of torah scrolls from the synagogue. Later the family had to move to another apartment, living together with 9 more persons.

On December 16, 1942 Louis with his wife were deported to ghetto Theresienstadt and there it became clear, that the Nazi’s promises regarding good conditions in a Theresienstadt senior’s home were a lie.

In the hard conditions of the ghetto he worked as street sweeper and at other occasional jobs, his wife peeled potatoes.

Louis Salomon describes the roll call at the Bohusovice valley and transports to the East. He also mentions the tense relations between Czech and German Jews. He volunteered for the transport which left on February 5, 1945 for Switzerland and reports on their reception and life there. After the war he did not return to Germany, but waited for a certificate to Palestine. On October 16, 1945 he landed in Haifa and lived until his death in Ein Harod. We received the above from Simon Weiss (Haifa).

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Michael Honey from England, who is researching the fate of the Jews of Valasske Mezirici, gave us a list of names of all citizens of the town killed during the Nazi occupation - a total of 160.

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Eda Krasa gave us a copy of a caricature of his father-in-law Oskar Fuchs (the father of his wife Hanna), made in 1943 by Leo Haas in ghetto Theresienstadt.

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Dita Ramon gave us lists and pictures of members of the youth movement “Maccabi Hatzair” in Prague from 1941.

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Hanna Sternlicht gave us material about Jewish children who were banned from schools and studied at the apartment of the Neumann family in Holic.

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Magda Barnea gave us 3 pictures of children from the Jewish school in Brno with their names.

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Mark Turkienicz from Toronto gave us a copy of statutes from Terezin, dated July 15, 1944.

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Received Through the Internet

Lena Halounova from Prague sent us over the Internet a list of children from Holland, who survived until the liberation and also the names of the physicians who took care of them.

TRANSLATIONS

Fate of a Lucky Man

In 1998 Franta Kraus from Prague wrote down his stormy autobiography - in Czech. Dita Kraus (no relation) from Netanya translated it now into English. When Franta, born 1925, was 5 years old, his parents divorced. The father Arnost was a traveling salesman and seldom at home, the mother Gertrude nee Litten was from a well known Prague family. In the beginning Franta was in a children's home, later he lived with his maternal grandparents. After the German occupation the grandparents moved and he lived with his mother. At age 15 he left school - with no regrets - and worked in a factory. In 1941 the mother was arrested by the Gestapo and deported to Ravensbrueck, where she died 3 months later. Until today her son does not know the reason for the arrest. Franta sees himself as a lucky person: on the advice of a representative of the Jewish community he volunteered to accompany his uncle in the 5th transport, which was sent in November 1941 to Lodz. But on the way home a German car ran him over and he spent two months at the Jewish hospital. In May 1942 his father was to be deported and he proposed to Franta to go with him and his second wife - but she convinced him not to volunteer. Both died in Majdanek. In August 1942 Franta was deported to Theresienstadt and lived there in the youth home L-218 with other working boys. He had a good job - distribution of food to the various barracks and he was lucky again: at the bakery he and his comrade Jirka Weiss were mistakenly given 100 "buchty" (Czech cakes) more than required and distributed them to the children's homes. Somebody betrayed them and they were indicted in front of a youth tribunal. Even though Fredy Hirsch defended them, they were sentenced and deported with the next transport to the East. In December 1943 Franta arrived at the Birkenau family camp. He again had good work - thanks to Fredy Hirsch - as a messenger boy for the infirmary. In July 1944, after the selection, he was deported to Schwarzheide camp and from there after a death march back to Terezin - weighing 36 kg. In March 1948 Franta volunteered for the "Hagana" and fought in Israel, in the Negev and in the Sharon. In April 1949 he returned to Czechoslovakia, at the time of the Slansky trials he was arrested as a Zionist, spy and enemy of the state. He undersigned all the protocols, learned his confession by heart and was lucky again: he got no death sentence, as the prosecution demanded, but "only" 22 years in a penal work camp. He was sent to the uranium mines at Jachymov and survived there too. After 8 years he was set free after promising to cooperate

with the security police, if requested. At first he worked as a driver, then as an official at the Prague Jewish community and later he managed the kosher kitchen. Finally he became secretary of the Jewish community offices. With the fall of the Communist regime in 1989 he was immediately fired - as communist collaborator. He found other work, until retirement - but he is still upset because Israeli representatives ostracize him. Even though he fought in Israel's war of independence and spent years in prison because of that, he was not bestowed the "Mahal" medal on the occasion of Israel's 50th Independence Day.

? Shimon Weissbecker finished the translation of H. G. Adler's book "Theresienstadt 1941 - 1945", one of the most important documentations of ghetto Terezin.

? Hanna Drori translated (from German and Czech into Hebrew) the diary of Ari Tarsi, who in the ghetto had cooperated closely with the "Jewish elder" Yaakov Edelstein. The diary was written immediately after liberation, while Ari was still in a hospital in Germany - far from Prague.

? Hans and Noga Reines translated Ab Caransa's book "Schizophrenie in Steen" ("Schizophrenia in Stone") from the Dutch into Hebrew.

? Lydia Schmolka translated the diary of the Danish hakshara.

? Magda Katzenstein translated Max Renner's letters and continued with H. Sladky's autobiography.

BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

Mask of Barbarism

From November 1998 to May 1999 an exhibition with this title on the subject of ghetto Terezin was shown in Lyon, France. It was organized by the Center for the History of the Resistance and of the Deportations - CHR.D.

In the framework of the exhibition a concert with works by Theresienstadt composers was played, a CD was published, a study group traveled from Lyon to Terezin - but the main thing: a catalogue was published, an impressive book - graphically probably the most beautiful ever printed about the ghetto.

The 250 pages include a prologue by the author Milan Kundera, contributions by French historians and researchers about the "model ghetto", about its role in the Nazi propaganda, about the painters and graphic artists in the ghetto, about theater and music and about children in Theresienstadt. And there are hundreds of drawings, sketches, programs of performances, children's drawings and reproductions of exhibits from museums and institutes in the Czech Republic, Germany, Holland, USA, France and Israel. Among these are dozens from the collections of Beit Terezin.

The catalogue was assembled with much serious research, work and love by the director of CHR.D in Lyon Ms Sabine Zeitoun and Dominique Foucher.

Annual Report of Pamatnik Terezin for 1998

Nearly a quarter of a million visitors (of these only some 17.000 young Czechs) were in 1998 in Pamatnik Terezin - so it says in the annual report published a short time ago. The main activities there: memorial ceremonies on Holocaust

Day (May 17), on Nazi victims memorial day (May 23), the latter attended by members of the Czech parliament and government, diplomats including the Isr. ambassador in Prague Raphael Gvir. There was a seminar about relations with aliens in Germany and in the Czech Republic with teachers from both countries participating, a performance of the children's opera "Brundibar", a festival "Musica Judaica", exhibitions "Art in Ghetto Terezin" and "The Small Fortress 1945 - 1948". At the memorial site a new educational center was opened. According to the collected data 225.227 persons visited last year "Pamatnik Terezin", of these 186.826 from abroad.

Fredy Hirsch - Not Forgotten

The personality of the physical education teacher Fredy Hirsch, one of the central figures of youth education in occupied Prague, ghetto Theresienstadt and also at the Birkenau family camp continues to arouse much interest.

Lucie Ondrichova from Prague studies his life for years now in the framework of her university research and is writing a book about him. In March 1999 she published a detailed item about him in the Czech weekly "Reflex" - from his childhood in Aachen, Germany, until his death at age 30 in March 1944 in Birkenau, when the September transport was gassed.

The author cites the well known harpsichordist Zuzana Ruzickova, one of Fredy's wards at the Birkenau children's barracks, who initiated the erection of a tablet in his memory in the courtyard of the former children's home L-417 in Terezin (now the ghetto museum), who defined him as a "good, brave and beautiful person - just but also not free of human error".

Prof. Jiri Franek, a member of the Communist underground in ghetto Terezin, who was one of the instructors at the children's barracks at the Birkenau family camp, wrote down his memories of Fredy Hirsch and let us have a copy. He mentions Fredy's soldierly and neat appearance even in Birkenau, the authority he radiated without even raising his voice, his brave manner facing the SS-men, but also his, Franek's reserve vis-a-vis Fredy because of his ability to impress even the Nazis.

Melanie Oppenheim's Book "Theresienstadt the People Trap"

Though much was written about ghetto Theresienstadt from various viewpoints - there is not much known about the Jews from Denmark interned there. The book "Theresienstadt the People Trap" was published now in German translation (from Danish) - it is a first-hand description of the history of Danish Jewry under the Nazis. Especially it is also the history of the Oppenheim family - Morits Oppenheim, a well known Jewish lawyer in Denmark, his wife and their two daughters. Trying to escape to Sweden in 1943, they were caught by the Germans, together with the family of judge Morits and brought to ghetto Terezin.

Melanie Oppenheim, who before the war was active in "Youth Aliyah", writes about the shock of everyday life in the ghetto: the huge dormitories, life in the shadow of the transports to the East, the terrible hunger. Later the Danish internees received parcels from the Red Cross.

Melanie O. also recalls talks with the second elder of the Jews, Dr. Paul Epstein from Berlin who was always very depressed - he was one of the few, who knew

about the fate awaiting the deported people. "We just did not believe him, when he told us ... we did not dare to tell our friends..." A special chapter deals with the visit of the Intern. Red Cross delegation and the Danish Red Cross in June 1944, the preparations and camouflage actions preceding it. Morits Oppenheim was forced to sign a declaration for Switzerland, that there is no dearth of medicaments in the ghetto. "What could he do? He could not say, that there are no medicaments at all ... they would have liquidated all of us".

The book evolved from talks Melanie O. had with the Danish journalist Tira Kristensen - after being silent for 35 years. Melanie Oppenheim died in 1981. It is quite obvious, that no one connected with publishing this book troubled to verify the recollections with the help of documents. That caused some absurdities - the description of bordellos at the entrance to the ghetto, the declaration, that transport of corpses was one of the main occupations and more. Nonetheless, descriptions of everyday life, humiliations, epidemics, the leave taking, the fight for human dignity and mutual help are seen in the book with a sharp eye and much empathy.

(Melanie Oppenheim: Theresienstadt - die Menschenfalle, Boer Verlag Muenchen 1998, translation from the Danish into German by Dietmar Possart)

Poems by Franta Bass

At the age of 9 Franta saw for the first time German soldiers marching through his town. At the age of 10, his mother sew a yellow star with the inscription "Jude" on his jacket. At age 11 he was deported with his family and thousands of other Jews to ghetto Terezin. The family was torn apart, Franta lived with other boys in a children's home - there he wrote his verse. He felt, that he belonged to the Jewish people. For the first time in his life he was hungry, started to understand the meaning of loneliness and helplessness and yearning. For the first time he saw death, illness, weakness. For the first time he experienced terror, facing the unknown.

He expressed all these feelings in 9 short poems - full of sorrow, awakening and getting aware of things in a new light, introspection and growing up too early at age 12. Franta died aged 14, in the gas chambers of the German extermination camp Auschwitz.

Thus writes Franta's brother Uri Bass, who translated the poems into Hebrew and published the slim volume "Franta - Poems by a Boy in the Ghetto". The book is dedicated to the memory of Franta and all the other children who found their death in the crematories of Auschwitz.

(Available in Beit Terezin, NIS 15.-)

Missing in Germany

Contrary to his predecessor Siegfried Seidel, who was sentenced to death in Vienna and his successor Karl Rahm, who was sentenced to death by a Czech court in Litomerice, the fate of Anton Burger was better. The second commander of ghetto Theresienstadt, known as a sadist, died of old age under the alias of Wilhelm Bauer in December 1991 in Essen, Germany.

The Bremen radio-journalist Karla Mueller Tupath researched the secret life of Burger and discovered how he avoided the legal system. Her book "Missing in Germany" (Verschollen in Deutschland) was published 1994 by the Konkret-Literatur-Verlag in Hamburg (in German).

Burger, like many of Eichmann's colleagues, was Austrian. He joined the Nazi party in his youth, later also the SS. After the war Burger was arrested twice - in 1947 and 1951 - for his criminal acts in ghetto Theresienstadt (1943-1944) and later in occupied Greece. Both times he managed to escape. He lived under various names in Germany and worked at building firms. He was considered honest, tidy and hard-working and was even given a nice old-age pension. He owned a valuable stamp collection of rare Czech stamps - as he said "a family heirloom". Bauer's real identity was discovered only after he died.

Big Contribution by a Small Group of Immigrants

"Czechoslovak Immigrants in Israel - their Contribution to Building the Country" is a collection of about 40 essays, published 1998 by "Keren Moreshet Yahadut Czechoslovakia" (Hebr.).

The editors are Ephraim Freund and Dov Quastler, the initiators: the lawyer Zvi Weigel (former chairman of the Association of former Czechoslovaks) and the current chairman Natan Steiner.

Though this is not a large group (15.200 persons and 20.000 children born in Israel) it includes many outstanding personalities - physicians, educators, diplomats, farmers, soldiers, scientists, industrialists and economists. Only in politics they were not represented - perhaps because of their lack of "elbows", which are needed here in the field of politics.

1500 names appear in the book, to some of them an article is devoted: Max Brod, Baruch Kurzweil, Felix Weltsch, S. Hugo Bergmann, Rudolf Samisch, Erich Kulka and others.

There is also a list of 314 former Czechoslovaks killed in action between 1929 - 1995 in Israel.

The book (440 pages) is also available in Beit Terezin.

Children's Homes in Ghetto Theresienstadt" and Guide for Visitors in German and English

The English version of Sharon Huppert's multimedia program "Children's Homes in Theresienstadt Ghetto" was finished a short time ago. Sharon amended and enlarged the English version. Graphics are by Orni Drori. The disk is to be used by English speaking families and institutions - kibbutz Hahotrim contributed financially.

In the near future the publishing house "Vitalis" in Prague will publish a German version of the "Guide for the Visitor to Theresienstadt". Dan Weinstein was responsible for the translation, kibbutz Hahotrim contributed here, too. "Vitalis" would be ready to publish also an English version of the guide - Hanna and Abraham Weingarten are going to translate - and the "Theresienstadt Guide" is on his way.

Survivors of the Kindertransport Organize Relief Campaign for their Rescuer

The newspaper "Haaretz" published in March 1999 an item about the "Righteous Gentile" Bill Werner Theodor Barazeti who was one of the main movers in the operation to bring Jewish children from Czechoslovakia to England (1939).

Barazeti, today 85, fell into financial difficulties and finally asked some of the "children" he had saved for help. One of these was Hugo Merom, a former pilot in the Israeli air force.

Hugo Merom (Meisel) was brought with his brother and 200 other children to England in July 1939. After they had traveled for 4 days nobody was found to adopt the brothers - they wandered from one institution to the next. After the war, learning that his parents did not survive, Hugo came to Israel.

Only 40 years later, relates Hugo, the children heard who was responsible for saving them. Barazeti, born in Switzerland, studied at Hamburg university and emigrated in 1934 to Bohemia. He worked for the Czech secret services and traveled to Hamburg as a spy. From there he escaped after a year. In Prague he helped Jews to reach England and Scandinavia - until he had to flee from the Germans, fearing to be recognized. Though he was already on his way to England he decided to return to Prague and organize the children's transports. Until July 1939 he managed to send 3 transports to England, then he himself escaped to England. There he worked for the secret services, too. His daughter relates, that her father never mentioned these activities. "If he requested help, he must have been on the verge of despair. My father always preferred to be the one who helps."

Hugo Merom now searches for "children" from the Kindertransports to mobilize the sum for Barazeti's debts. For now he found 150 of the 664 saved Jewish children.

Paper about Dr. K. Fleischmann

Tamar Horovitz, who studies art at the "Oranim" seminar, wrote a final paper titled "Jewish Art in the Holocaust". She focused her work on the dermatologist Dr. K. Fleischmann, painter, poet and deputy director of the health commission in ghetto Terezin.

Tamar deals with various problems: how could people create in such hard conditions? What moves people to create in a crisis? What characterizes art in the Holocaust? What is the value of art created out of personal motivation and not as documentation?

Tamar made use of documents and original paintings accessible in Beit Terezin and naturally consulted the team there, too. Her paper is interesting, encompassing and describes day-to-day life in the ghetto, as Dr. Fleischmann lived it. The paper may be read at Beit Terezin.

Contributions for Beit Theresienstadt

? The Isr. association of former Czechoslovak citizens deposited with us the exhibition "Meeting of Cultures - History of Czechoslovak Jewry", displayed some years ago at the Diaspora Museum, Tel Aviv. The association also contributed the sum of NIS 20.000 for the renovation of Beit Terezin.

? The pianist and friend of Beit Theresienstadt in Germany Prof. Matthias Klieg organizes musical evenings - the proceeds to benefit Beit Theresienstadt.

? Bequests by our members: Margarethe Augstein and Lilly Gertrude Goldstone, both members of our association in England, who died a short time ago, bequeathed each a sum to Beit Terezin - which will certainly help us in our work.

? The Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs helped us to finance our annual meeting in May 1999.

INFORMATION REQUESTED

? Shmuel Jaffe (formerly Kurt Schoen) seeks information from those who knew his sister Ruth Schoen in Terezin. Ruth was born in 1936 in Brno. In 1942 she was deported together with her mother Alice and grandmother Mathilde Morgenstern to ghetto Terezin. From there she was sent in October 1944 to Auschwitz. Please contact: Shmuel Jaffe, P.O.B. 145, 70700 Gedera, Israel

? David Breitbart looks for information about his father Kurt Breitbart, who was born in 1925 and lived in Vienna. On October 10, 1942 he arrived at ghetto Theresienstadt from where he was deported on Sept. 28, 1944 to Auschwitz. He was liberated and died in the USA. Please contact: David Breitbart, 40 Morrow Ave., Scarsdale, N.Y. 10583, Phone ++1-914-7930289

? Eva Duskova wants to contact women who were interned in the concentration camp Lenzing near Voeklabruck. She intend to organize a meeting. Her address:
Eva Duskova, Mahulenina 1857 14, 16200 Praha 6, Czech Republic.

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Corrections

In our previous issue two errors crept in:

On page 11 should be Bern Brent and not as printed

On page 12 H. Sladky's death is given as 1988 instead of 1998.

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Membership Dues

Dear members - the membership dues for 1999 are:

Israel Abroad

Singles NIS 100.- US \$ 50.-

Couples NIS 150.- US \$ 70.-

2nd generation - singles NIS 60.-

2nd generation - couples NIS 90.-

We would like to stress, that we have not raised our dues for years now. Please remit the dues for 1999 as soon as possible, to enable us to continue our work.
Thanks in advance!

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