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ACTIVITIES AT BEIT TEREZIN

THE FAMILY CAMP WAS DIFFERENT

A study day dealing with the special characteristics of the Birkenau family camp was held at Beit Terezin on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the murder of 3792 prisoners at this camp, who were gassed in one night, on March 8, 1944. Ruth Bondy stressed in her lecture that this was the only camp of the huge Auschwitz-Birkenau compound, where the former inmates of ghetto Terezin were imprisoned together with their families – in the framework of preparations for the visit of the delegation of the International Red Cross in the ghetto, in case that the members of the delegation would want to visit one of the “labor camps in the East”, where ghetto prisoners were allegedly sent. The performance staged for the members of the delegation in June 1944 in ghetto Terezin surpassed all expectations and they accepted the “town like any other” they saw there. The family camp was not needed anymore. Yaakov Tsur related the story of the last days of the family camp, which was liquidated finally in July 1944, when 3.000 of its prisoners were sent to work in Germany and the remainder, about 7.000, to the gas chambers.

Another outstanding feature of the family camp was the children’s barracks, established there through the initiative of Fredy Hirsch, member of the Zionist youth movement Maccabi Hatzair and sports instructor. Moderated by the chairman of our association Dr. Eli Lawental, Rabbi Sinai Adler, Ditta Kraus, Hana Greenfield, Susi Weiss and Hana Weingarten talked about their memories from the family camp. The event was very well attended and there were also leaders of youth delegations to Europe, who wanted to learn more about the subject.

CABARET SONGS FROM TEREZIN

After many months of research and work, a CD with 16 cabaret songs from ghetto Terezin came out, sung in the original Czech by the “Club of the Lost Talents” – former ghetto prisoners. The title is “King of Cabaret of Ghetto Terezin, Songs by Karel Svenk”. The initiator and producer of the project is the composer and librettist Kobi Luria. He became interested in the subject of cabarets in Theresienstadt while preparing the performance “Lehayey Hahayim” which premiered at the theater festival in Acre in 1990. Almost all songs on the CD were written or adapted by the playwright, actor and composer Karel Svenk, who perished in early 1945 at one of the death marches. The music for most of the tunes was not preserved and Kobi Luria succeeded to reconstruct both the text and the tunes with the help of former ghetto prisoners. Some of them had taken part in the music life of the ghetto or had heard the songs there and remembered them. The “Club of the Lost Talents” consists of: Manka Alter, Uri Bass, Jirka (Shmuel) Bloch, Ruth Elias, Eva and Peter Erben, Greta Klingsberg and Eva Lukash, they are accompanied on the piano by Moshe Zorman. Among the songs of the CD is “Black Jim” in the genre of spirituals, the tango “Senorita”, the moving “Farewell” and, of course, Svenk’s song “Vsechno jde kdyz se chce” (everything can be done, when the will is there) – which became sort of an anthem of the ghetto. Most of the financing of the CD came from our association, aided by the Claims Conference, Yad Vashem and the donor Danny Tocatly. The CD is available at Beit Terezin, NIS 60.-

The newspaper “Haaretz” published on April 19, 2004 a detailed article by Noam Ben-Zeev about the CD, titled “Back to the Cabaret of Theresienstadt”, channel 10 of Isr. TV brought an interview with Kobi Luria and with the vocalists.

THANKS

The already traditional honoring of our volunteers and those engaged in our educational activities was held on December 24, 2003 at the clubroom of kibbutz Givat Hayim-Ihud. After lighting Hanukka candles came a few songs – accompanied by Shmuel Bloch on the accordion, then the chair of our association Dr. Eli Lawental and the chair of the committee for events Shosh Sade addressed the audience.

Ellen Fischl-Bohner reported on a family trip, tracing drawings made by her father's cousin Sonia Fischl-Fischer as a child in the ghetto. In May 1944 she was deported with her mother and sister to Birkenau; all three of them perished there. The family discovered Sonia's drawings, full of light and feeling, only in the year 2000 in the Prague Jewish Museum, while searching for traces of the family. They decided to make the pictures into a traveling exhibition.

Musical intermezzos, performed by Noa Bizansky (soprano) and Tonia Tambori (piano) enlivened the evening. In recognition of their efforts each volunteer received a copy of the book "Sefer Habriha" (Book of the Illegal Immigration).

OUR ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of our association was held on May 15, 2004, at kibbutz Givat Hayim-Ihud. In the morning members of the first generation met, at the same time members of the second and third generations attended a talk by Ephraim Sidon and Itzik Weingarten, the authors of the drama "Mezeritsh", performed by the Tsavta Theater. The subject is survival of a group of Jews in inhuman conditions, in a hideout in the small town Mezeritsh. Following the talk it was decided that members of the second and third generations would see the performance together.

Two diplomats honored us: the new Czech ambassador in Israel Mr. Michal Zantovsky addressed the audience and recounted his family's connection to Terezin and the new Slovak ambassador in Israel Mr. Milan Dubcek (son of the initiator of the "Prague spring" in 1968).

The assembly convened in the afternoon at the "Vienna Hall", chaired by M. Livni. All the prescribed legal steps were voted upon – the annual reports on activities and finances, release of the outgoing steering committee and the election of a new one. We expressed our thanks to Arie Brodavka who, after many years, relinquished his function in the control committee of the association.

The composer and musician Kobi Luria spoke about the songs by Karel Svenk, "King of Cabarets in Ghetto Terezin". Three members of the "Club of the Lost Talents" – Manka Alter, Shmuel Bloch and Greta Klingsberg sung a number of chansons from the new CD.

On the occasion of the annual meeting an exhibition was displayed at the "Vienna Hall" of works by students who participated in the project "Kamarad 23". This is a teaching program based on the 22 issues of the children's newspaper "Kamarad" published in ghetto Terezin. The impressive works included articles, drawings, computer programs and animation. "The recurring message of the works was – not surprisingly – the confrontation of loss and death with optimism and hope" said Mira Faran, director of Beit Theresienstadt.

HOLOCAUST DAY

On Holocaust Day, which fell this year on April 19, a symposium on the theme "Living Remembrance" was held at Beit Terezin, on the importance and the meaning of the personal testimony for the witness, his family and society in general. The talk was held in the

framework of documentation by survivors, organized by the regional committee Emek Hefer, Beit Theresienstadt and Yad Vashem. After the lighting of memorial candles and a short ceremony small groups talked about the testimonies.

MEETING OF THE “BARNEVELD” GROUP

With the aim to make contact with Dutch survivors of ghetto Theresienstadt, Liora Cohen initiated a meeting of survivors from the “Barneveld” group; it was held on May 5, 2004. The members of the group were deported in September 1944 to ghetto Theresienstadt and lived there as a separate group – they had come from all over Holland to the town Barneveld. About 20 persons from all parts of Israel participated in the meeting, survivors and members of their families, they were found through an ad in the publication of former Dutch citizens. At the meeting they recounted their personal experiences – some of them for the first time since WWII. Many expressed their interest to meet again, also with members of the second generation; they also said that they would be ready to assist Beit Theresienstadt to collect material about Dutch Jews in Theresienstadt and to translate Dutch texts.

THE AUSTRIAN MINISTRY FOR EDUCATION

ordered and bought (through Anita Haviv of the second generation) 150 copies of the German version of the teaching program “Color in Gray” – paintings by Alfred Kantor, a prisoner of Terezin, Auschwitz and other camps. Our association published this teaching program (in Hebrew and German).

THE MAN FROM TEREZIN

The architect and sculptor Shlomo Diamant donated Beit Theresienstadt a bronze statue created by him (75 cm high), titled “The Man From Terezin” – a tortured man, without clothes, without stomach, whose feet touch his heart – a “muselman”. That is how Shlomo (then Sigmund) remembers the survivors of death marches, who arrived in the ghetto in the last days of the war. He was aged 16 when he was deported there from camp Sered, Slovakia. While studying architecture in Bratislava, Slovakia, Shlomo also learned sculpting. An exhibition of his works titled “Memories” at the cultural center of Netanya displays 40 statues, among them “The Man From Terezin”. Shlomo Diamant donated a second bronze statue with the same title to the Jewish Museum in Bratislava. The statue we received will be shown in our exhibition room.

OUR EDUCATION CENTER

“KAMARAD 23” – IN ISRAEL AND ABROAD

Despite cuts in financial allocations the Jewish Agency informed us that they would continue to support this project in the current year, too, since it is very successful. Already now our Education Center is getting many orders by schools, who want participate in the project “Kamarad 23”. This year we again got the award for education by the “Massua” institute.

DRAMATIC MEETING

On February 26, 2004, students of the 9th class of the Jewish Experimental High School Ramot Hefer met for the second time with their peers of the Arab “Ibn Sina” school in Kalansawa, to learn together about the Holocaust. The initiators of the meeting were Otman Hatib (Ibn Sina school), Yonat Klar (education center Beit Terezin) and Nili Gross (project manager Ramot Hefer). All three are members of the association NAS, which visited Auschwitz-Birkenau in May 2003. There evolved the idea to create a special teaching program for Jewish and Arab youth on the Holocaust, xenophobia and racism. The emphasis: to stress hope in a hurtful and difficult reality.

The first meeting of Jewish and Arab students studying the Holocaust as part of their history lessons was dedicated to getting to know each other, basic concepts about ghettos in general and Terezin specifically and the personal testimony of a survivor, who was the same age as the students when imprisoned in the ghetto.

At the second meeting the students already knew each other and divided into two groups: one learned about the children’s newspaper “Kamarad” published in the ghetto, the other watched the animated film of children’s drawings from ghetto Terezin “Imprisoned Dreams”. Suddenly two Israeli army officers appeared at Beit Terezin and requested to talk to Shira Zimmermann, one of the students from Ramot Hefer. The reason was – her brother Amir was killed that same morning in a terror attack at the Erez border crossing. Shortly afterwards the psychologist of Ramot Hefer arrived, informed the students about the situation and brought them back to their school. The Arab students were informed only after leaving Beit Terezin – shocked and hurting they decided to send Shira a letter, a poem or a drawing.

In the following a few quotes – Ruan Salama wrote: “I am very sorry about what happened, but I would like you to know that that what happened, was not our fault”. Muhmad Salama wrote: “I regret the murderous attack, I regret the suffering. I wish I was a bird and free”. Muhmad Lama wrote to Shira: “Attacks ... hate ... envy ... killing ... why? Victims falling down in a black world. Shira, in spite of all we remain human beings living here side by side”. Lama Natur wrote: “To complete the project of living together one has to feel the other, to understand them, to feel sorry for them.”

(From an article by Nili Gross in the newsletter of the second generation)

“In the face of the sensibilities and the difficult circumstances both sides decided, not to let up and to try to continue the project” said Yonat Klar, who organized the third meeting. It was held on June 1, 2004, this time with the participation of the Israeli-Palestinian forum of families, whose members became victims.

At this meeting a young Palestinian – who lost two of his brothers in the Intifada – spoke about the problems of a mourning brother. His words found deep understanding among many of the young listeners. Then the participants began to create a follow-up issue of “Kamarad”. Various groups wrote texts, drew, made comics and worked on the design, instructed by artists – volunteers. “We tried to show the children both sides and the outcome was many-

faceted, moving and full of creativity” resumed Yonat Klar, who is already planning similar meetings for the next school year.

This year a group of students – 8th class – from Indianapolis, USA, also participated in the project and involved the whole Jewish community of the town. In connection with the project the students came to Israel, accompanied by the community’s rabbi and a number of parents. During their visit in Beit Theresienstadt the students from Indianapolis presented their project and reported that events on Holocaust Day there were also related to this subject. The Indianapolis community donated \$ 3.000 for the continuation of the project.

The director of Beit Terezin Nira Faran informed us that through contact with leaders of delegations of the Jewish Agency from abroad we could expect more visits of youth delegations from abroad in the near future.

FURTHER DAYS OF “HISTORY, MUSIC AND REMEMBRANCE”

Through the efforts of the musical director of Beit Terezin Dudu Sela and the project manager Yonat Klar this year, too, the financial means were found for the seminar “History, Music and Remembrance”. It will take place on July 25 – 30, 2004, at Beit Terezin, this time in the form of creative workshops. Music students will – inspired by music from ghetto Theresienstadt – compose their own works. It is planned to play selected compositions from the seminar at a festive evening dedicated to the 60th anniversary of the end of WWII and the liberation of ghetto Terezin.

SECOND GENERATION

THE CHARTER OF THE SECOND GENERATION

expresses the commitment to continuing remembrance. Members of the second generation drafted and signed the document at the annual meeting in May 2004, it will be displayed at the entrance of Beit Terezin. It says:

We, members of the second generation, relatives and friends of inmates of ghetto Theresienstadt, those who perished in the Holocaust and those who succeeded to escape this hell alive, declare our decision to continue the commemorative work of the founders and builders of Beit Terezin, in the spirit, the aims and intentions laid down in the charter of foundation.

We consider ourselves to be a bridge between past and future and feel the commitment to present a true picture of ghetto Theresienstadt to those coming after us, with all its specific features – the story of people who did not give up and who maintained a life of culture and creativity in the shadow of death, who kept the basic commandments of justice, openness, friendship and mutual help.

To express all this we want to assure that Beit Theresienstadt remains a house filled with life, expressing the belief of its founders and of ourselves. We will hold educational, cultural and social activities so as to bequeath this legacy to future generations.

NEWSLETTER OF THE SECOND GENERATION

In issue no. 11 of the publication of the second generation, which came out in April 2004 is an article by Nili Gross about a meeting of Jewish and Arab students. The same issue, edited by Talila and Tsvi Kislev, contains also a contribution by Petr Daiml from Kiriati Tivon about a meeting held in Prague in May 2003 – these were members of the second generation, who grew up in Czechoslovakia during the Communist regime. In the years 1962 – 1974 they used

to meet in the building of the Prague Jewish community at Maislova Street, so they called themselves “Maislova children”.

The “children” themselves, now in their fifties, gave the lectures. Noemi Brodavka – Finkelstein reports in the newsletter on a study day held on March 15, 2004, at Beit Terezin on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the liquidation of the September transport at the Birkenau family camp.

The book recommended in this issue is “Hador hasheni betsel hashoah” (The Second Generation in the Shadow of the Holocaust) by Aharon Haas, published by Hed Arzi. Talila Kislev writes that this is a profound research of the Californian professor of psychology and psychiatry dealing with the impact of the Holocaust on the life of survivor’s children, who today are grown up.

ACTUALITIES

ART OF DEFIANCE

The Catholic University of America in Washington held a symposium titled “Terezin and the Art of Defiance”, from April 12th to April 18th, 2004. Among the invited participants was the Israeli composer Kobi Luria, who lectured both on cabarets in Terezin and on Karel Svenk’s chansons, parts of the CD he had produced were played. In the framework of the symposium the Hawthorne String Quartet played Terezin music and the founder of the quartet Mark Ludwig, who was one of the first to include Theresienstadt music in general concerts, gave a talk about the opera “Der Kaiser von Atlantis” by Viktor Ullmann.

A very moving event was a festive concert titled “Defiant Requiem”, a combination of Verdi’s music, under the baton of Murry Sidlin, with memories of Eda Krasa, Marianka Zadikov-May and Eva Rocek who were members of the choir of “Requiem” in the ghetto, directed by Raphael Schaechter and shots from the Nazi propaganda film, depicting the concert in the ghetto. Toward the conclusion of the event pictures were projected showing people being loaded into railroad cars; at the same time the musicians left the hall one by one until only the empty stage remained. A projected request asked the audience to rise for a moment of silence instead of applause.

EROTICISM WITHIN THE GHETTO WALLS

After it became known that the actor and producer of pornographic films Robert Rosenberg intends to make a film in Terezin, the State Memorial forbade entering with video cameras. That did not keep Rosenberg from shooting a number of video films at the memorial site and in its vicinity. The newspaper “Haaretz” reported that Rosenberg expressed his surprise that his intentions awoke such fierce reactions: he did not make a pornographic but “only an erotic film”. “We also traveled to Auschwitz and there we were even assisted” Rosenberg remarked.

60 YEARS SINCE THE SEPTEMBER TRANSPORT WAS LIQIDATED

On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the murder of 3792 prisoners of ghetto Terezin, who were deported in September 1943 to Birkenau and killed there in the night of March 8, 1943 in the gas chambers, memorial ceremonies were held – on March 7, 2004, at the Prague Pinkas synagogue and on March 8, 2004, at the National Memorial Terezin. The same day an exhibition about the Birkenau family camp opened at the Terezin Ghetto Museum.

About 60 former prisoners of the family camp and members of their families traveled from the Czech Republic to Birkenau, the site of the former family camp – from which only the concrete foundations of the barracks are left today. At the spot, where once the children's barracks stood, they recited Kaddish and sang the Czech national anthem.

GHETTO CHILDREN'S SONGS

On the anniversary of the day Auschwitz was liberated, January 27, 2004, which was declared "International Holocaust Day", a festive concert was performed at the Prague National Opera. The audience included many dignitaries, former camp prisoners and students. The concert included the oratorio "Terezin Song", a work by the Vienna-born American composer Franz Wachsmann (1906 – 1967). He was a well-known composer of film music and had composed music for 8 children's poems from ghetto Theresienstadt, in 1964 he directed their premiere at the Cincinnati Music Festival. At the Prague concert, which was organized together with the Mauthausen camp committee, 200 vocalists – both adults and children – from Austrian choirs participated, under the baton of Thomas Kerbel.

DRAWINGS BY TEREZIN CHILDREN

In the museum of Wroclaw in Poland an exhibition of children's drawings from ghetto Terezin was opened on January 15, 2004, titled "I Didn't See a Butterfly Here". The drawings were lent from the Prague Jewish Museum, which has a collection of 4500 children's drawings from the ghetto, created under the instruction by Friedl Dicker-Brandeis.

The Jewish Museum in London opened an exhibition of children's drawings from ghetto Terezin on March 24, 2004; it was also titled "I Never Saw Another Butterfly" – taken from the poem of Pavel Friedmann. 20 original drawings and 50 copies from the Prague collection were displayed; Sir Nicholas Winton opened the exhibition. Sir Winton saved at the start of WWII hundreds of Jewish children from the "Protectorate" and brought them to England.

IN MEMORIAM WILLY GROAG

On July 3, 2004, a ceremony was held at kibbutz Maanit, during which the "Dr. Willy Groag Galam Foundation for Academic Studies" awarded scholarships. Willy, the adored head of the girl's home L-410 in ghetto Theresienstadt was a member of kibbutz Maanit since arriving in 1946 in then Palestine until his death in October 2001. For many years he was chief chemist of the "Galam" plant, which produces glucose and starches. Members of the Groag family, co-workers from Galam, members of Maanit and Willy's friends from Terezin attended. The director of Galam, Yossi Peled, spoke about Willy – the human being, artist and scientist. This year 8 students received scholarships. Willy's personality should inspire them – not only in academic studies, but also with his character and human kindness.

RESTORATION OF SYNAGOGUES

The Prague Pinkas Synagogue, whose walls bear the nearly 80.000 names of the perished Jews of Bohemia and Moravia, was heavily damaged by the floods in the fall of 2002. After restoration it was reopened for visitors in September 2003. The repair of the handwritten names, especially on the lower part of the walls, was finished in May 2004.

The synagogue in the Smichov quarter in Prague served during the Communist regime as a store for spare parts for the Kolben-Danek enterprise. It underwent many alterations – without consideration for the past. The building was now restored and air conditioning installed. It

will house the archives and the collection of paintings and graphics of the Prague Jewish Museum. A facsimile of the founding charter dated 1863 was deposited in the Holy Ark of the synagogue. The Smichov Jewish community was destroyed in the Holocaust.

HAMBURG REMEMBERS

An exhibition about the women's camps in Hamburg and vicinity opened on January 23, 2004 in the foyer of the Hamburg town hall. These camps were part of concentration camp Neuengamme. The first of the 24 camps was put in operation after the arrival in Hamburg of 600 women prisoners from the Birkenau family camp. They were housed in former tobacco stores in the harbor and worked at clearing rubble after the heavy bombings on the town by the allied forces. Later the women, all of them from Terezin – were brought to barracks at camp Neugraben and worked at a plant for prefabricated housing. Dr. Dagmar Lieblova, head of “Terezinska iniciativa” in Prague, said at the opening that she was 15 years old, when she was brought to Hamburg.

In Neugraben, too, the women were not forgotten. On International Holocaust Day, January 27, 2004, a wreath was laid at the commemorative plaque. Pupils of the Suederelbe School wrote essays about the women's camps. The initiator of these activities is Karl Heinz Schulz, who for many years now deals with the history of camp Neugraben.

LIFE AND DEATH OF A STAR

“Prisoner of Paradise” is the title of a documentary film about the life of actor and film producer Kurt Gerron (from Germany), broadcast on April 4, 2004, by the Isr. Television. Gerron owes his stardom mainly to his role as director of cabaret in the film “Blue Angel” with Marlene Dietrich. Gerron came to ghetto Theresienstadt in February 1944, from camp Westerbork in Holland. He worked in cabarets and also acted in them. In summer 1944, after the visit of the delegation of the International Red Cross, he was ordered to produce a propaganda film about the ghetto. The film was known under the name “The Fuehrer Donates a Town to the Jews” – it was never shown to an audience. On October 28, 1944, Gerron was sent to Auschwitz – to his death - it was the last transport to be gassed. The captivating film was produced in the year 2002 by Malcolm Clark and Stewart Sender in the USA.

FROM RABBI LOEW TO MASARYK

was the name of an international workshop about the history of Czech Jews, held at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem on May 6, 2004. The Erich Kulka award for research on Czech Jewry was granted that same evening to Dimitri Shomski from Haifa University. Erich Kulka – politic prisoner in Auschwitz – wrote together with Ota Kraus “Factory of Death” – the first extensive work about Auschwitz. Erich Kulka's son prof. Dov Kulka donated his late father's Holocaust library to Beit Theresienstadt.

THE GOLEM

is the name of an Argentinian-Czech project. In its framework exhibitions of drawings and books were held in Buenos Aires in October/November 2003. There were also concerts and performances. In the “Colon” theater the opera by Viktor Ullmann “Der Kaiser von Atlantis” was performed.

RECEIVED IN OUR ARCHIVES

STUDYING IN THE GHETTO

Hana Drori, formerly Hana Polakova, who lives at kibbutz Hahotrim, gave our archives a small clothbound copybook. She got it for her 12th birthday in ghetto Terezin and called it "Vsechno" (All). Paper was not readily available in the ghetto, so this was a beautiful present and served Hana for various purposes. She wrote into it – with a pencil – lessons in arithmetic, geography, English, Hebrew, Latin and German – proof of the level of the illegal schooling provided in the ghetto in spite of the SS prohibition. In her tight handwriting Hana noted in the copybook also poems she wrote, music for of a song, texts for performances in the children's home, which she authored together with her room-mate Eva Fislova, nicknamed Fishka, also drawings and thoughts.

When Hana was deported to Auschwitz in autumn 1944, she forgot "All" on the shelf above her bunk. Her friend Ella Stein, now Weissberger, who remained in the ghetto until liberation, kept the copybook and gave it to Hana after her return from the camps.

THANKS TO SPORT

Margalith (Margit) Sonnenfeld from Tel Aviv gave us the copy of a poem by the educator and sports instructor Fredy Hirsch, written by him on a page of her autograph book on December 19, 1936, during a ski vacation of Zionist youth. The poem, illustrated by Fredy's drawings, praises the young Margit. It says: ... for you as a Jewess, sport / is as important as the word... Margalith indeed dedicated her whole life to sport, mainly as swimming instructor for disabled persons. In her book "Bamayim kulam shavim" (In the Water All are Equal), published in 2003 in Tel Aviv with the support of "Ilan" (Isr. Organization for the disabled), the sports center for the disabled in Ramat Gan and "Beit Halohe" (Fighter's House), Margalith Sonnenfeld – born 1925 in Brno – relates her life story. The main subject of the book is her work with disabled persons. Since 1960 these, with her help, achieved impressive victories at the Olympics for disabled persons.

OUR ARCHIVES ARE READY

The archives of Beit Terezin were newly organized and expanded. Since quite a part of the material was translated from Czech and German into Hebrew and English, we are now ready to provide material to students and pupils for their papers. Those interested should contact us.

BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

NOVEL ABOUT THE FAMILY CAMP

Beit Terezin published “Tsiur Hakir lo Hushlam” by Otto Kraus, the Hebrew version of his book “The Painted Wall”, published originally in English in 1993. (The Czech translation came out the same year, the German one in 2002.) The translation is by Tamar Fuchs. The book is written as a fictive diary of a youth instructor.

Otto B. Kraus was born in Prague in 1921; he was a member of the Zionist youth movement “El Al” and youth instructor in the children’s barracks of the Birkenau family camp. In Israel he was an English teacher and educator at the “Hadassim” youth village, he died in Netanya in 2001. His widow Ditta Kraus supported the publishing of the book, also financially. (Available at Beit Terezin, NIS 55.-)

JEWISH TALK

“Mezi nami receno” (Speaking Among Ourselves) is the title of a new book by Ruth Bondy about the language of Jews in Bohemia and Moravia, published in 2003 by the Franz Kafka publishing house in Prague. The book contains a dictionary of about 400 special expressions used by Czech and Moravian Jews since the middle of the 19th century until the Holocaust. These Jews, who spoke both Czech and German, but did not know the Jewish idiom of their forefathers anymore, still retained its last remnants. The expressions are accompanied by quotations from books by both Jewish and Gentile authors, who wrote in Czech and German. The well-known Czech artist Jiri Sliva illustrated the book with cheerful drawings. Available at Beit Terezin, NIS 55.-

Also in 2003, “Argo” in Prague published the Czech translation of Ruth Bondy’s autobiographical book “Vice stesti nez rozumu” (More Luck than Sense). On the occasion of the publication of the two books Ruth Bondy lectured on May 4, 2004, at the Cultur Center of the Prague Jewish Museum; students of the Art Academy DAMU performed scenes from “Mezi nami receno”.

CONTINUED RESEARCH

The yearbook 2003 of “Theresienstadt Studies and Documents” appeared in spring 2004 in Prague, published by „Sefer“ in an impressive graphical design. This is the sixth volume (Czech) since the Institute of Terezinska Iniciativa started publishing the yearbooks in 1996. Jaroslava Milotova and Eva Lorencova edited it, this time it includes also subjects not directly connected to the ghetto. Among others there is an article by Louise London about the British government and Jewish refugees from Czechoslovakia (discriminated against compared to Gentile ones) and one by Katerina Capkova about the Jewish philosopher Theodor Lessing, symbol of resistance against the Nazis, who was murdered by them in Bohemia in 1933. Further there is research by Margalith Shlain on the efforts of the then head of the Prague Palestine office Jacob Edelstein between May and December 1939, to save the Jews of the Protectorate. Another contribution is by Cathrine Stodolsky about the painter Malvina Schalkova, whose works from ghetto Terezin depict mainly the sufferings of old people. The volume contains also an article by Daniela Repova on the philosopher prof. Emil Utitz, who managed the ghetto library in Terezin and also an article titled “Aerial Roots” by Ruth Bondy on the history of Jewish names in Bohemia and Moravia – based on transport lists from 1941 to 1945 to the ghettos Lodz and Theresienstadt. Most of those deported were annihilated.

GHETTO LIFE IN OFFICIALESE

The “Tagesbefehle” (orders of the day) in ghetto Terezin were published continuously since the beginnings of the ghetto in December 1941 until April 22, 1945, - a few days before liberation. The Institute of Terezinska Iniciativa and “Sefer” in Prague published the first volume of a new publication of a collection of documents “Acta Theresiana”. It contains – in Czech translation – all 432 orders of the day, which came out until April 1944. In preparation of the visit of the delegation of the International Red Cross the title of the “order” was then changed to “Mitteilungen der Juedischen Selbstverwaltung” (Announcements of the Jewish Administration). Anna Hyndrakova, Raisa Machatkova and Jaroslava Milotova edited the exemplary scientific publication, with technical support by Michal Wolf.

Reading these “orders of the day” today is moving, perhaps especially because of the dry officialese. They convey the desperate efforts of the Jewish leaders to bring a kind of order into the prisoners life and to ensure a somewhat normal life – in spite of the continuing chaos of arriving and outgoing transports. In the first months the relatively small number of daily deaths was noted, too. In September 1942 this was discontinued, with the arrival of tens of thousands of old people from Germany and Austria the daily death count rose to over a hundred. The “orders of the day” also record verdicts by the Jewish ghetto court. The charge was usually theft of food or clothing, the punishment: prison from a few days up to months.

THE EAGLES TOOK OFF

The children at home no. 7 in the children’s home L-417 in ghetto Terezin called themselves “Eagles” – they were 12 – 14 years old, most of them did not survive. “Nesarim – Child Survivors of Terezin” is the title of a book by Thelma Gruenbaum, published by Valentine-Mitchell, London and Portland, Oregon, USA, in 2004. The book consists mainly of interviews with 9 of the surviving boys and with their beloved instructor Franta Maier.

The idea for the book came in 1990, after the fall of the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia. For its realization Misa Gruenbaum, one of the “children” and his wife Thelma traveled all over the world to interview former wards of the home in the USA, Canada, Australia, Switzerland, Germany, France and Brazil. Then came a common meeting, with members of their families, in a Czech village and from that a deepening of the friendship. The interviews show certain common characteristics of the “Eagles”: all of them got an education, mostly academic, an interesting profession, founded families and believe in the utmost importance of family life. All of them value the friendships developed in the children’s home, the education they got from Franta – who was only by a few years older than they were, all of them have a positive relationship to their Jewishness, have a strong will to get ahead in life – and to never give up.

WOMAN RABBI IN THERESIENSTADT

The publication for education, Jewry and society of the religious teachers in Israel “Etrog” published in its issue of March 23, 2004, the story of the only woman rabbi in ghetto Theresienstadt – Regina Jonas. Aged 42, she was deported together with her mother in October 1944 to Auschwitz, where she perished. The article by Ruthie Glueck speaks of the hard struggle Regina Jonas had to fight with the rabbinic establishment of Germany to get accredited as rabbi. Further the authoress writes about the speeches Regina Jonas gave in ghetto Terezin and about the spiritual help old and sick people got from her. The article is based mostly on work by the historian Margalith Shlain, who researches ghetto Theresienstadt and its leading personalities for many years now.

GIRLS IN THE GHETTO

The book “Die Maedchen von Zimmer 28 – Freundschaft, Hoffnung, Ueberleben in Theresienstadt” (The girls of room 28 – friendship, hope, survival in Theresienstadt) by Hannelore Brenner-Wonschick, published in 2004 by Droemer Verlag in Munich, Germany, deals with the story of a group of girls at home L-410 in the ghetto. It starts with a list of 20 girls who did not survive. The book speaks of the life of 10 “girls”, now in their 70ties and two of their instructors. Today they live in the Czech Republic, Germany, Austria, Sweden, Israel, Russia and the USA. In 1991 they met in Prague again, for the first time after many decades and since then they met often at a spa in the Czech Krkonose Mountains. In addition to the general historical background the book also quotes fragments from a diary written in ghetto Theresienstadt by Helga Pollak-Kinsky, starting in January 1943. There are also excerpts from the autograph book of Anna Flach, nicknamed Flashka, with drawings of her friends. The book describes the day-to-day life of the girls in room no. 28 of the home, the selfless work of the instructors; it reproduces drawings made in the ghetto and pictures of the “girls” as children and today.

STRENGTH OF BELIEF

The autobiographical book by rabbi Sinai Adler “B’gay Tsalmavet” (In the Valley of Death) was published in 2003 in a new and revised edition. It stands out from most other memoirs of his contemporaries from Czechoslovakia, who lived through the Holocaust as youngsters: rabbi Adler comes from a family of rabbis, in which, of course, all religious commandments were kept even in the horrible conditions of Auschwitz and other camps. The book testifies to the unshakable belief of the author in the Jewish God, even in the most terrible moments, after his parents died in the gas chambers in July 1944. Sinai, then Wolfi, studied Torah and Talmud not only in ghetto Terezin, but also in Birkenau and he also laid t’fillin (phylacteries) and prayed. He writes in the book how his father blessed the Sabbath with a slice of dry bread in the crowded cattle car on the way from Terezin to Auschwitz, about the building of a sukkah (tabernacle) from planks of a broken bunk, about the sounding of a shofar (ram’s horn) smuggled to Auschwitz by an Hungarian rabbi, about survival by the grace of Providence. Rabbi Adler confronts the question, how the merciful father, the Holy one, blessed be He, could look at the destruction of the Jewish people and did not intervene – rabbi Adler’s conclusion is that one has to accept God’s work for better or worse.

LIFE STORY

Shlomo Kidron, formerly Fritz Taussig, was 16 years old when he last saw his parents Karl and Lotte nee Frankl on April 10, 1939, on the platform of the Prague train station – he was leaving with a Youth Aliyah group for Palestine. The parents were deported in May 1942 to ghetto Terezin and from there after a few days to an extermination camp near Lublin. In his book “Zikhronot Hayay” (My Life’s Memories), published by kibbutz Hahotrim, Shlomo remembers his childhood in Teplitz Schoenau, Northern Bohemia, the first years at kibbutz Ashdod Yaakov, his work as longshoreman in Haifa, the beginnings of kibbutz Hahotrim, his work in the banana plantations and as a shoemaker. He writes of his love for music and of his family. All this is written in a down-to-earth manner with no big words. At the end of the book he names great historical personalities he would have liked to meet – Leonardo da Vinci, Beethoven, Herzl and he concludes: “But more than anything else I would like to meet my parents again.”

SCIENTIST, IN SPITE OF ALL

Dan H. Yaalon, professor for Earth Sciences at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, was born in 1924 in Uherske Hradiste, Moravia; the family's name was then Berger. After the Nazi occupation in 1939 he went with a Youth Aliyah group to an agricultural retraining farm in Denmark. His mother and grandmother were deported to ghetto Theresienstadt and did not survive. Dan Yaalon finished writing his autobiography in 2003. It proves what can be achieved with a strong will – even in difficult conditions. He started his studies at the Agricultural University in Copenhagen and escaped at the time of the German occupation to Sweden. There he continued his studies at Uppsala University, volunteered for “Mahal” (volunteer's unit from abroad) to fight in the Isr. War of Independence. Finally he joined the Department for Earth Sciences at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

LOVE

“Farewell in Theresienstadt” is the title of a book by Erica Fischer, translated into English by Allison Brown, about the love of Mihal Beer (formerly Maud Stecklmacher) to Hermann Tandler. It began in Mihal's birthplace Prostejov (Moravia) – Maud was then 12 years old, Hermann almost twice that. Despite all obstacles the love story continued, even in ghetto Terezin, where the Jews of Prostejov were deported in July 1942. In October of that year Hermann's 65-years old mother was included in a transport “to the East” and Hermann volunteered to go with her. In his last letters he wrote of the hope to see Maud again. Maud's ailing father committed suicide in the ghetto – she, her mother and sister remained in the ghetto until liberation, but Hermann did not return. For years Mihal waited and only in 1974 she had the strength to find out what happened to him: both, he and his mother perished in Treblinka. Only then Mihal committed her story to paper; it was also made into a film.

THE WORK GOES ON

The Czech National Memorial “Pamatnik Terezin” writes in its annual report for 2003 that most of that year's work consisted of repairing damage caused by the floods in 2002 to buildings, exhibitions, documents and other parts of the collections. The repairs were made possible by generous subventions of the Czech Ministry for Culture as well as donations by organizations and private donors. The total sum was about 15 millions Czech korunas (nearly 600.000 US \$). Despite the repairs the number of visitors to the Small Fortress in 2003 remained constant (194.000) and the number of visitors to the ghetto museum even increased slightly. The educational activities included 3 seminars for teachers dealing with the Holocaust, 37 study days for Czech schools and 31 longer teaching programs. In the framework of the annual student's competition “When we hear an S.O.S. call” and the graphic competition “The Shapes of Evil” 433 works were submitted.

HANOCH SHAHAR

was a child when he was brought to ghetto Terezin. In issue no. 33 of April 2004 of the pensioner's publication of Safed “Kivun Hadash” (New Direction) he published the story of Tova Friedmann, at age 7 she was deported with her mother in 1944 to Auschwitz, somehow slipped through the selection and survived. In the weekly “Hadash Bagalil” (New in Galilee) of April 16, 2004, the poem “Aharei Hashoah – Mihirhurei Libo shel Nitsol Shoah” (After the

Holocaust – Thoughts of a Survivor) by Hanoach Shachar was printed. It begins with a question: After the Holocaust – I ask myself quite often/ why was it I who stayed alive?

ASSISTANCE FOR HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

Research by the Brookdale Institute (Jerusalem), initiated by the Foundation for the Benefit of Holocaust Victims in Israel, found that 252.900 Shoah survivors live in Israel today. For evident reasons this number will decrease, in 2010 it will be about 166.800. The percentage of survivors entitled to assistance (by Isr. Law), now 18%, should rise by then to 24%, from these 6% will get maximum aid. Predictions say that the number of those entitled to aid (up to 9 weekly hours) will this year be about 7.200 – this number will hardly change until 2010.

TRANSLATIONS

The translations by Alisa Shek from Czech and German into English are so many that we cannot list all of them here. There are various documents from the folder “Health” in our archives, an article by Richard Glasar about the revolt in Treblinka, a report by Josef Klaber about the commander of the ghetto police Karl Loewenstein, articles about the Evangelic congregation in Terezin, about the resistance movement in Birkenau (by Hugo Langsfeld), personal testimonies by Petr Lang about the camp in Litomerice and by Hanka Fischl about the Birkenau family camp, an article about the evacuation of camp Schwarzheide and other material from our archives.

Miriam Cervenka translated (from Czech to Hebrew) i.a. the memoirs by Josef Svehla, documents about the policeman Frantisek Makovsky, about the activities of the underground movement in Terezin, the illegal activity of Alexander Srulovic, correspondence from after the liberation between Werner Neufliess, gardener and agricultural instructor in the ghetto, with the Prague Jewish community regarding the cemetery in Theresienstadt.

Shimon Weissbecker translated from German into Hebrew the book by Karl Lagus and Josef Polak “Stadt hinter Gittern” (Town behind Bars)

Mordechai and Chava Livni translated the testimony of Ruzenka Friedlaender from German to Hebrew.

Menachem Hoffmann translated from German to Hebrew an article about the Litomerice concentration camp and its prisoners.

Miriam Gal translated from German to Hebrew a letter by Irma Lauscher, who was an educator in ghetto Theresienstadt.

LETTERS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CORRECTION

Francis (Franta) Maier (Encino, California) sent us a correction (issue no. 56, Jan. 2004):
 “Today I received the copy of your magazine. The report about the book by Rindler and Klein contained 3 mistakes in three lines:

- 1) Misspelled my name Mayer instead of Maier
- 2) I got it for my 22nd birthday not the 29th
- 3) The boys were from the Nesharim heim no. 7 at L-417 and not from Q-609”

We are sorry for the errors and apologize.

*

Leiser Moldavan, a central activist of the Czechoslovak Hehalutz movement, volunteered to work as instructor with the children from ghetto Bialystok. These were brought in August 1943 to ghetto Theresienstadt, in October of that year Leiser M. was murdered in Auschwitz together with the children and the rest of the staff.

Eliezer Sichermann is trying to find out every detail about the life and work of his uncle Leiser – whose name he bears. All who knew Leiser Moldavan or have any information about him are requested to contact:

Eliezer Sichermann, 95, Shderot Weizmann, 42252 Netanya, Israel
Phone *972 –9=8615685 or *972-52-759490

*

Following the study day on the Birkenau family camp (held on March 16, 2004, at Beit Terezin), Edna Mor wrote:

“I have a special personal connection to the subject of the family camp since both my grandmother (my mother’s mother) and my aunt (my mother’s sister) were there and perished. For the first time I understood that there are people who were there, survived and possibly knew my relatives. I know that the chances are slim, but I want to find out.

My grandmother was called Kamilla Blonsky, born 1880, from Brno. She was deported on December 18, 1943, from ghetto Terezin to the family camp. My aunt’s name was Grete Blonsky-Winterstein, born 1909, from Brno, she was sent on September 6, 1943, from Terezin to the family camp. Please, contact me – even with the smallest details:

Edna Mor (Zajicek), 12, Kidron Str., 34463 Haifa, Israel, Phone *972-4-8241381

*

Who knew **Cilli (Caecilia) Varacha**, who – together with her mother **Lotte (Charlotte) Mayer** came from Vienna to ghetto Theresienstadt? As far as is known Cilli was deported in October 1944 with a children’s transport to Auschwitz. She did not arrive there and died possibly en route. Please contact:

Arie Meir, 23, Oren Str., 34734 Haifa, Israel, e-mail: meir1935@netvision.net.il

*

Yakub Horn was born on September 7, 1923, he came to ghetto Terezin with transport Ck in December 1942. From there he was deported in September 1943 to the Birkenau family camp and perished there. All who knew him or met him in Birkenau are requested to call his sister:

Ruth Gilead, Phone *972 –9-7417382

*

Arie Weiss asked us to publish the following:

I have constructed a website intended to further contact between Holocaust survivors. Though much time has gone by since the end of WWII, there are still survivors who did not succeed to find members of their families. A short time ago a case became known of a brother and a sister, both living in Israel, who did not meet for 67 years and became connected with the aid of a computer. It is now possible to input personal details – free of charge – to: shoamemo.org or to the following e-mail address – arik50@netvision.net.il

*

Heike Carstensen studies art history at the Christian-Albrecht University in Kiel, Northern Germany. She writes her dissertation about the painter and graphic artist **Julie Wolfthorn**, who was deported on October 28, 1942, with a transport of old people from Berlin to ghetto Theresienstadt, together with her sister Louise Wolf. She died there after more than two years, in December 1944, a short time before her 81st birthday. It is known that the artist created portraits in the ghetto, too, up till now six were found, one of them from 1943 of an unknown baby. All who have details about the artist and her work in the ghetto are requested to contact **Alisa Shek at Beit Theresienstadt**.

*

The museum at the former concentration camp Gross-Rosen in Poland asks all former prisoners from ghetto Theresienstadt, who were later in the Gross-Rosen camps, to convey everything known to them about the camp and its prisoners. The information is intended for research on the camp's history and completion of the prisoner's card index. The address is: **Muzeum Gross-Rosen, 53-300 Walbrych, skr. pocst. 217, Poland**

*

The "Book of Memory" for 2004 of the Society for the History of Czechoslovakian Jews and other organizations in New York published the history of the Jewish community in Dvur Kralove, Czech Republic, and its synagogue – which was destroyed during the Communist regime. The president of the Society Rabbi Norman R. Patz, whose congregation has a Torah scroll which previously belonged to the Dvur Kralove congregation, requests all former members of this community or their descendants to contact him:

**Rabbi Norman R. Patz, Temple Sholom of West Essex,
760 Pompton Ave., Cedar Grove, New Jersey 07009, USA**

*

The head of the Documentation Department of the Jewish Museum in Prague, Ms Magda Veselska, asked us to publish the following:

I would like to approach you with a request – toward the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Jewish Museum in Prague in 2006 we are preparing a publication, which will deal with the history of our institution.

Therefore – please let us know, if among your members or their parents are such, who worked during WWII at the Jewish community offices in Prague, later at the Jewish Council of Elders or directly at the Jewish Central Museum – which functioned in the years 1942 – 1945.

I would be very thankful for any contact:

**Magda Veselska, vedouci oddeleni dokumentace, Zidovske museum v Praze,
U Stare skoly 13, 11001 Praha 1, Czech Republic
Tel *420-221 711 565, Fax *420-737 919 006, e-mail: magda.veselska@jewishmuseum.cz**

*

MEMBERSHIP DUES

The steering committee of our association decided to leave the current membership dues unchanged. These are, for 2004 too, as follows:

	Israel	Abroad	
Singles	NIS 100.-	US \$	50.-
Couples	NIS 150.-	US \$	70.-

Beit Terezin is affected by the decrease in government subventions and so are the budgets of Israeli schools – which, in turn, is felt by Beit Terezin. We ask you therefore to support us financially above the membership dues – each according to his possibilities. Thanks in advance to those, who make it possible to continue the activities of Beit Theresienstadt.

Membership dues and contributions may be remitted to the bank account of our association: Beit Terezin, Bank Leumi L'Israel, branch no. 958, account no. 11810/25.
Address of the bank: Bank Leumi L'Israel, branch Herzlia Pituah, Kikar De Shalit, Herzlia Pituah, Israel

Suggestion:

Members celebrating “round” birthdays could suggest to their family and friends, who would like to do something nice for them, to think of a donation for Beit Terezin – instead of a present. So, for example, did Miriam Cervenka, one of the volunteers of Beit Theresienstadt, on the occasion of her 80th birthday: We received NIS 1500.-

Thanks to her and all those, who will follow in her steps!

Editorial Board	Tal Bashan, Ruth Bondy, Alisah Schiller, Nira Faran
Text and Editing	Ruth Bondy, Tal Bashan
Translation	Mordechai & Chava Livni