

# Dapei Keshar

Beit Theresienstadt Theresienstadt Martyrs Remembrance Association

ISSUE No. 86 >> April 2019



80 years since establishment  
of the Protectorate of  
Bohemia and Moravia



THERESIENSTADT MARTYRS REMEMBRANCE ASSOCIATION

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## Coming up events

### April 3<sup>rd</sup> 2019 at Ein HaHoresh Theater

A fundraising event  
Screening of the film "Back to the Fatherland" and a  
panel with the directors of the film

### May 17<sup>th</sup> 2019 at Beit Theresienstadt

The International Meeting of the Theresienstadt Martyrs  
Remembrance Association  
The conference will be hosted by Michel Kichka

*Prosperity  
Flourishing  
Growth*

*The Beit Theresienstadt team  
wish you a Happy Passover !*



Truda Groag, Theresienstadt

## To all members and friends of Beit Theresienstadt



The year 2019 has brought with it good tidings for Beit Theresienstadt – the Ministry of Education has finally begun to support our educational activities. As unbelievable as it may sound, tens of thousands of students participate annually in activities at the educational

center, but only this year have we been recognized by the Ministry of Education.

This was preceded by a lengthy campaign that began in Anita Tarsi's time as director of Beit Theresienstadt. The efforts began to bear fruit in the last three years, when the eight institutions that engage in imparting the memory of the Holocaust united and worked towards promoting a government regulation that would recognize them as unique institutions, not only archives/museums/educational institutions but rather institutions that have a specific goal, similar to the Yad Vashem Law. The intensive collaboration between the institutions: Beit Theresienstadt, Lohamei Hagetaot (ghetto fighters house), Masuah, Moreshet, Nir Galim, Yad Mordechai, Shem Olam, and the Holocaust Archives, led to the desired result and at the same time reinforced their mutual work relations.

Thanks to the increased budget we have expanded our staff. Hani Poltorak joined the staff of the educational center and Nitzan Ravid joined the archive staff. Furthermore, the archives now enjoy four volunteers who, among other things, are helping with preparations for opening the archives to the public. Another change in the team is the retirement of Sima Shachar after 20 years of work. She had the privilege of working with the founders and taking part in the initial building process. Sima will continue coming to Beit Theresienstadt as a researcher for her PhD thesis.

The current issue of Dapei Kesher includes various subjects – a signal from the past is provided by an article written by Dorit Vider, daughter of Max and Esther (Dita) Vider, among the founders of Beit Theresienstadt. Dorit tells the story of a special birthday greeting prepared by Dita's friends in the Theresienstadt Ghetto, who included Ruth Bondy, Honza Bermer, and Hanna Weingarten.



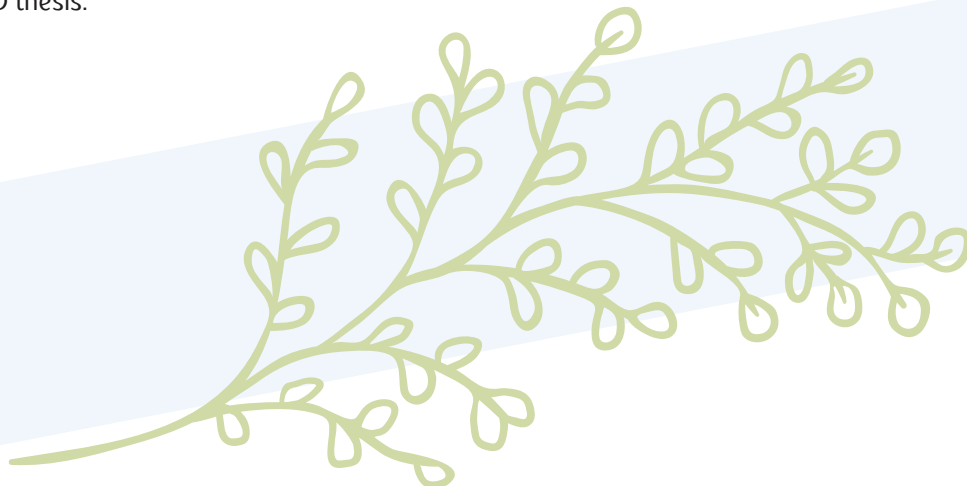
Dita and Max Vider with Hanna Weingarten (in the middle)

Tal Bashan, Ruth Bondy's daughter, writes about her mother and the new exhibition in Beit Theresienstadt.

Dr. Anna Hájková is seeking information on Willy Brechman, who was a kapo in Auschwitz. There is also an extensive article by Dr. Margalit Shlain on establishment of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia 80 years ago, the main topic of this year's Holocaust and Bravery Memorial Day Ceremony.

I hope you enjoy the issue.

**Yours,  
Tami Kinberg**





## Whole Fragments 2

One year after the passing of journalist, author, translator, and Holocaust researcher Ruth Bondy, the exhibition "Whole Fragments 2" opened in late November 2018 – artists and select exhibits from Beit Theresienstadt corresponded with texts written by Ruth Bondy. The exhibition was displayed at Beit Theresienstadt and at the Givat Haim Ihud Gallery. Ruth Bondy, born in Prague and a survivor of the Theresienstadt Ghetto, was among the founders of Beit Theresienstadt and had an important role in shaping its ethos. Together with a



handful of fellow survivors from the ghetto who undertook the task, she amassed a considerable amount of documentary material that formed the basis of the archives, with the aim of conveying the story of the ghetto to the next generations. The exhibition "Whole fragments 2", named for Ruth Bondy's autobiographical book ("Whole Fragments"), is built of clusters that combine items from the Beit Theresienstadt archives with parts of texts written by Ruth and artwork by Israeli artists. The curator of the exhibition, Adi Yekutieli, is among Israel's prominent art curators. In the founding scroll of Beit Theresienstadt, the founders expressed their wish to create a bridge between past and future – a connection that this exhibition upholds in a special and symbolic way. Kibbutz Givat Haim Ihud, where some of the ghetto's survivors live to this day, recognized the significance of establishing a place that would commemorate the victims of the Holocaust and donated the land for Beit Theresienstadt. The relationship between Beit Theresienstadt and the kibbutz is also manifested in this exhibition, which draws together one of the exhibitions at the museum and the Givat Haim Ihud Gallery (managed by Hanush Morag). A continuous dialogue between past, present, and future; imparting humanistic values; and a fresh interpretation of familiar circumstances – all these characterized Ruth Bondy's actions, and it seems that there is no better way to commemorate her than an exhibition born of a fertile and productive collaboration – between cultural genres, between artists and curators, and between the different participating institutions.

Among the artists who collaborated on the exhibition are: Avner Katz, Orit Hofshi, Eitan Vitkon, Osnat Ben Shalom, Eliezer Gogo Rozen, Buteina Halabi, Bilha Aharoni, Danny Kerman, Drora Witzman, Hagar,



Danny Kerman at the opening

Vered Nachmani, Talia Israeli, Yair Garboz, Yehudit Schreiber, Yossi Veissid, Yossel Bergner, Jiri Sliva, Najhat Abdalla, Noa Yekutieli, Nurit Gur Lavi, Sergio Daniel Chertakov, Amit Cabessa, Ran Hadari, Sara Zaira, Know Hope (Adam Yekutieli).

"The curator's conception of the clusters in this exhibition differs from the customary conception", says Adi Yekutieli. "The exhibition encompasses multiple linearity and narratives and the viewer decides which path to take. The images from Beit Theresienstadt's art collection, created by people who lived at the camp, are given another opportunity when placed in proximity to modern works of art. This presentation to the viewer enables a softer observation of this harsh subject and a different way of discussing it and learning from it. The exhibition is a homage to Ruth Bondy's inquisitiveness and precise writing, giving 'room' as it does to creators who were her friends and colleagues and to all human beings."

The exhibition's opening event took place at Beit Theresienstadt in the presence of Czech ambassador to Israel, Mr. Martin Stropnický; Head of the Emek Hefer Regional Council, Dr. Galit Shaul; Director of Beit Theresienstadt, Mrs. Tami Kinberg; Tal Bashan, Ruth Bondy's daughter and initiator of the exhibition; the curator of the exhibition, Adi Yekutieli; and many artists and guests. Ruth Bondy's last book, "The Gravity of Humor", was launched at the opening of the exhibition. As part of the opening events, a series of events took place during the months of December and January. Among the most

prominent were: a gallery discussion with the curator of the exhibition, Adi Yekutieli, and artists who participated in the exhibition; fascinating lectures by Prof. Hanna Yablonka on her new book "Yeladim Beseder Gamur



(The Children are Fine)", by Danny Kerman – illustrator, author, and satirist, on humor, satire, and his acquaintance with Ruth Bondy, and of course by Ruth Bondy's daughter, journalist Tal Bashan, on "The World of Ruth Bondy". ■

## To seek light from knowledge of darkness / Tal Bashan

"I felt a need to share my anxieties with someone and to find consolation for them. Luckily, I chose writing. Ballet dancers and opera singers must retire when they show signs of aging but I, to my joy, can continue exposing myself behind the screen of words." In these words, in the preface to her book "Small Consolations", my mother described the main motivation underlying her work – not pretensions of improving the world, not ambitions of honor and greatness ("I have no skill for greatness", she wrote once), rather first and foremost a longing, as a writer, for personal human contact with the reader, for moments of benevolence within life's adversities. "To seek light from knowledge of darkness, from the inability to bear despair," as she defined it. This led to the names of her newspaper columns ("It will be okay", "Half a consolation") and of her personal books ("Whole Fragments", "Small Consolations"), and was the wellspring that nurtured the outstanding thoroughness and persistence of her work, nearly up until her death. "A good book," she wrote, "creates a world from nothingness, one that cannot be mistaken, a reality that bears its stamp," while she, as she herself attested, stuck to the facts (particularly in her writing about the Holocaust). "I felt: I could not use big words, because they are incapable of bearing the weight of the terror. Only a dry, inconsequential tone, only the facts themselves, after choosing and reducing, are sufficiently strong to avoid disintegration."

However, precisely in her reserved style of writing, which lacks pathos and flowery expressions, in her observant, sharp, humane, and humorous writing, she too created, as in an act of alchemy, a world and style of her own, one that cannot be mistaken – in her journalistic writing, in the biographies she wrote, including about the Holocaust, and even in her translations. "Precisely in her modesty and matter-of-factness, her books exude her humane personality, wise mind, and beautiful soul, both as an author and as a translator," wrote translator Dori Parnas. Now, inspired by my mother's words,



Ruth Bondy and Tal Bashan. Photo: Moshe Shai

which retain their full force after her passing as well, another world has been created – full of creativity and soaring on the wings of imagination and association – a world that begins with words and continues with plastic arts, that seeks and manages to touch the essence of human existence, in its own way. My mother chose her own unique and original course, and the exhibitions based on her writings were born in this spirit, the fruit of a unique and extraordinary collaboration between curators, artists, and galleries, reflecting on their viewers as well.

All this is taking place within and around Beit Theresienstadt at Kibbutz Givat Haim, a place that she and her fellow survivors founded and nurtured with the aim of imparting the universal and human values that had characterized the Theresienstadt Ghetto to the next generations – not only as a memorial but rather as an active place full of life. And although my mother was always uncomfortable with words of praise and appreciation, in her lifetime as well as in her passing, I believe that if she had known about the creative enterprise inspired by her in this place, she would have been extremely happy. ■



Ruth Bondy's last book

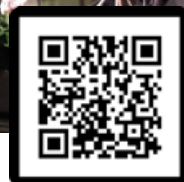


## International Remembrance Day, "Nevertheless I am not saying goodbye" / Tal Sondak and Marian Miller



The moving show by Tal Sondak and Marian Miller, "Nevertheless I am not saying goodbye", was held on January 27 in cooperation with Kibbutz Givat Haim Ihud as part of the International Holocaust Day events.

The show is based on the poems of young poet Gabor Ardash, who was murdered in the Holocaust. Tal Sondak (singer and creator), married to Tali who grew up in Kibbutz Givat Haim Ihud, composed the music for the album's songs, and he was joined by Marian Miller, a cousin of Gabor Ardash, who related her memories from that era, the history of her family, and how she chose to commemorate her story and that of Gabor. ■



QR to song by Gabor Ardash, performed by Tal Sondak and Marian Miller.



## Visit of the German Football Association

In December 2018, members of the DFB delegation (the German Football Association) visited Israel as part of the U18 global soccer tournament. During their time in the country, the members of the delegation met Zvi Cohen, a survivor of the ghetto, at the "Theresienstadt League" exhibition displayed at the "Hamoshava" stadium in Petach Tikva, and were given a guided tour of Beit Theresienstadt, as well as a tour of the kibbutz guided by Leah Hertz. ■



From right: Tami Kinberg, Oded Breda and Marco Bode





## Musical lecture marking 77 years since the establishment of the Theresienstadt Ghetto

A special musical lecture marking 77 years since the establishment of the Theresienstadt Ghetto, moderated by Dan Rapoport and accompanied by singer Alexandra Wilson. The concert included compositions by Gideon Klein, Ilse Weber, Viktor Ullmann, and Alex Ulshantz – composers who operated in the Theresienstadt Ghetto and died in the Holocaust. We commemorated the event through musical means that suit the special nature of the Theresienstadt Ghetto, which housed Jews from Central European countries. ■



## Event marking Family Day

On Wednesday, 13 February 2019, we gathered at Kibbutz HaOgen to celebrate Family Day with members of "Café Eropa" who came with their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren to enjoy a family oriented musical show. The "Beit El" Choir, featuring both adults and teens, opened the event with their heartwarming singing, followed by the "Vermouth Brothers" who performed childhood songs and stories of the Land of Israel, in their show "Poets in song and story", rousing all generations to dance. It was a fun and joyous evening for four generations! ■



## Intergenerational conference

Once again, we gathered on Chanukah for an intergenerational conference. The eighth candle of the menorah was lit by a survivor of the ghetto, Achim Bagienski, and his family. At the gathering, the diary of Ruth Haas Meissner, described at length in the previous Dapei Keshet, was launched. In addition, Beit Theresienstadt awarded a certificate of appreciation to Rani Idan, the departing head of the Emek Hefer Regional Council. ■



## Torch Lighters – The 2019 Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day Ceremony

### Esther Bagienski



Esther Ayelet (called Arna Minnie) née Bagienski was born in 1934 in Berlin, Germany. On 27 May 1942, when Esther was 8 years old, her father Herman Hirsch was taken by the Gestapo to the Sachsenhausen

concentration camp and murdered there the next day. On 5 June 1942 Esther was taken from her home, together with her mother Margareta and her two brothers Joachim and Arno, and sent to the Theresienstadt Ghetto. Esther mentions two heavy memories of many she experienced at the ghetto and that remain with her to this day: the faces, the shouts, the weeping, and the cries for help that came from the fenced house called the Madhouse, and sitting next to a large mound of ashes, filling boxes, and throwing the ashes into the river. Esther, her mother, and her brothers, who endured subhuman conditions at Theresienstadt, were liberated in February 1945 on a train that left the ghetto for Switzerland.

In September 1945 Esther, her brothers and mother, left Switzerland, immigrated to Palestine, and joined Kibbutz Maayan Zvi, where their older sister Miriam Timna, among the kibbutz founders, was living. Esther remained at the kibbutz ever since. She relates that her victory over the emotional tribulations and endless pain that she experienced is her family. Her two children Osnat and Yizhar and her seven grandchildren are the light and joy of her life. ■

### Gershon Miller



Gershon was born in the Theresienstadt Ghetto on 24 September 1944. In December 1941 Gershon's parents, Rosa and Hanush Miller, were deported to the Theresienstadt Ghetto together with Yoel, Gershon's older brother, who was 4 years old. Gershon's mother worked in the ghetto sewing and cleaning. One day she was caught,

together with other women, trying to smuggle letters out of the ghetto. She was imprisoned. At the time, she was in the first months of her pregnancy. After six months in jail she was taken to the hospital and Gershon was born. Miraculously, Gershon and his mother were returned to the ghetto, where they spent another 9 months until the liberation of the ghetto in May 1945. Five days after Gershon was born, his father was sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where he was murdered.

After the war, Gershon and his mother returned to Prague, and in 1949 they immigrated to Israel. After graduating from high school, Gershon studied at the Air Force Technical School, enlisted in the army, and served as an aircraft technician. After his discharge, he worked in the Israel Aircraft Industries, and in 1988 he began working for a medical equipment company, and founded a medical equipment company in 2004. Gershon married Chana in 1972 and they have 3 children and 7 grandchildren. ■

### Devorah Ben Yehuda



Devorah was born in the Theresienstadt Ghetto on 23 February 1943.

Devorah's parents, Leopold and Bertha Pollak, were sent to the ghetto in September 1942 from Munich, Germany. Devorah's mother arrived at the ghetto pregnant.

Her daughter was born about 5 months later. After the delivery, her mother had to continue working at the sewing workshop and she hid Devorah at various locations in the ghetto. The family survived in the ghetto until liberation.

Devorah and her parents returned to the city of Würzburg in Germany, where many Jewish refugees gathered. Her mother died in 1950, at the age of 43. In 1952 Devorah immigrated to Israel with Aliyat Hanoar and was taken to Kfar Batya. She married and has 3 children and 9 grandchildren. She volunteered at the Tel Hashomer hospital for many years. ■



## Dr. Michael Viener



Michael was born in the Theresienstadt Ghetto on 28 October 1944. Michael's parents, Greta and Walter, were separated about two weeks before he was born; his father was sent on a transport to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where he was murdered. Michael and his mother remained in the ghetto until liberation in May 1945. In 1946, Michael and his mother immigrated to Palestine. One year later, Michael's mother remarried and the family lived in Haifa, where Michael attended the Reali School. In 1960 his step-father died, and in 1970 his mother died, at the age of 63.

Michael studied medicine in the army's reserve program, specialized in internal medicine, and served as the doctor of the Golani Brigade. During the First Lebanon War Michael was the doctor of the Paratroopers Division. From 1991–1994 he served as the IDF's Chief Medical Officer. In 1991, during his service, he joined the President of Israel, Chaim Herzog, on a visit to Czechoslovakia, and placed the President's Wreath at the cemetery in Theresienstadt. After his discharge from the IDF with the rank of Brigadier General, Michael occupied various management roles in the healthcare system until retiring. Michael is married to Shoshana and has 3 sons and 6 grandchildren. ■

## Talma Segal



Talma Segal was born Ilse Brier in Vienna, Austria, in 1937 to her parents, Ludwig and Regina Breier. After Germany annexed Austria in March 1938 the family's life changed. A list was prepared of all Jews in the city. Talma's father was forced to hand

over his carpentry shop, with all the machines and a large timber warehouse. The family had to leave their apartment and move in with their grandparents – 10 people in one apartment. Talma's father worked at any job he could get. He was incarcerated for one year after being caught building double-sided crates (to hide money and jewels).

In October 1942, 4 days after Talma's 5th birthday, the family was sent to the Theresienstadt Ghetto. In the ghetto the family was separated and Talma and her brothers very rarely saw their father.

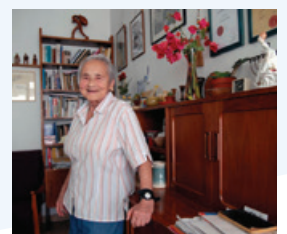
In May 1945, after the liberation of the ghetto by the Red Army, the family returned to Vienna, and several months later Talma's mother died. Talma and her brothers joined the Hashomer Hatzair youth movement and immigrated to Israel in the 1950s. Talma and her younger brother Dan arrived at Kibbutz Nir David and her older brother Yehuda lived at Kibbutz Ramat Hashofet. Talma's father died in Vienna, aged 62. Her older brother Yehuda was killed in a traffic accident aged 40. Her younger brother Dan died in 1998. Talma married Aharon in 1958. They have 4 children and 14 grandchildren. ■

## Michal Bar

Michal was born in the city of Prostějov in Czechoslovakia in 1929 to her parents, Kata and Fritz Shtekelmacher. After the occupation of Czechoslovakia and the establishment of the protectorate in March 1939, Jews were forbidden from entering public gardens, leaving home after 8 pm, and travelling outside the city.

In 1941, the family was forced to leave their home and move in with other Jewish families. They had to hand over their radio, jewelry, furs, bicycles, and many other belongings. In July 1942 the members of the family, including Michal and her parents, were sent to the Theresienstadt Ghetto in a crowded dark train. Michal's father and grandfather died in the ghetto. Michal's grandmother was sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1944, where she was murdered. Michal, her sister Carmela, and her mother remained in the ghetto until its liberation by the Red Army. After liberation they returned to Prostějov, and in 1949 they immigrated to Israel. Michal married Shimon and they have 3 children, 6 grandchildren, and 3 great-grandchildren.

Michal is involved in many endeavors to preserve the memory of the Holocaust. She wrote a collection of short stories about the period of the Holocaust and is in regular contact with the museum in Prostějov, which engages in preserving the memory of the city's formerly magnificent Jewish community. She continues to appear and to tell her story at "Zikaron Basalon" memorial evenings held on Israel's Holocaust Memorial Day. ■



## Meeting between German- Israeli youth Gan Nahum Gymnasium in Rishon LeZion and Schiller Gymnasium Berlin October 2018



A tour at Kibbutz Givat Hayim Ihud



Lecture at the school



Tour at Daliyat el Carmel and  
meeting with Buthaina Halabi artist



Meeting with Darfur Refugee



Students from Shfririm school and  
Members of "Amcha" Netanya  
February 2019



"Liga Terezin" Memorial Tournament  
Hanukkah 2018





Seminar for teachers from Israel and Berlin, October 2018



"A Song that removes the darkness"  
Seminar 2018 Hanukkah



## Eighty years since establishment of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia / Dr. Margalit Shlain

### Background

On 28 March 1918 the first Czechoslovak Republic was established (after the dissolution of the Austro Hungarian Empire at the end of World War I), which included the countries of Bohemia and Moravia (on the approximate area of the current-day Czech Republic) and the Sudetenland, Slovakia, and Carpatho-Rus, encompassing members of different nationalities – Czechs, Slovaks, Ruthenians, Germans, Jews, and others.

The rise of the Nazis to power in Germany in 1933, led by Hitler, encouraged nationalist feelings among the three million Germans who constituted most of the Sudetenland's residents. In October 1933 Konrad Heinlein founded the Sudeten German Home Front, a right-wing party of Czechoslovak Germans, which in 1935 was renamed the Sudeten German Party (SdP) and demanded autonomy for the Sudetenland.

After the annexation of Austria, Hitler moved to occupy Czechoslovakia. In March 1938 he demanded of Edvard Beneš, the president of Czechoslovakia, that the Sudetenland – with its strategic and military significance due to the fortifications, mines, and advanced industry that it contained, be annexed to Germany, claiming that it was mostly inhabited by Germans who had no equal rights. Czechoslovakia rejected his demand. In the summer of 1938 Hitler instructed the Wehrmacht to prepare for an invasion of the Sudetenland, thus raising military tensions in the area. The prime ministers of Britain and France approached Czechoslovakia to try and resolve the conflict and demanded that the Germans living in the Sudetenland be granted wide autonomy, and eventually gave in to all Hitler's demands. In the Munich Agreement signed on 30 September 1938 by Hitler, Chamberlain, Daladier, and Mussolini, the First Czechoslovak Republic was dissolved. It was replaced by the Second Czecho-Slovak Republic, where Slovakia was given autonomous status (emphasized by the hyphenated name), the Sudetenland was given to Germany, and Carpatho-Rus was annexed to Hungary. On 14 March 1938 Jozef Tiso, the prime minister of the autonomous Slovak Republic, declared the independence of Slovakia as a satellite state of Germany on the Polish border.

### The protectorate

On the dawn of 15 March 1939, the army of Nazi Germany invaded Czecho-Slovakia after its president, Dr. Emil Hácha, was forced to sign an "official declaration" in Berlin before Hitler to "maintain the quiet, order, and peace in this part of central Europe" and to declare that "in order to serve this goal and to achieve a state of calm, the fate of the Czech people and land has been confidently placed in the hands of the leader of the Reich".

The Czecho-Slovak Republic no longer existed. As of 16 March 1949 Bohemia and Moravia became, by order of the Führer, a protectorate of the Reich – the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. In theory, Hácha remained president and Alois Eliáš was appointed prime minister of the autonomous administration. However, in practice all authority was granted

to Konstantin von Neurath, who on March 18 was appointed Reichsprotektor of Bohemia and Moravia by Hitler, and to Karl Hermann Frank, one of the leaders of the Sudeten Germans, whom Himmler appointed his deputy, with the title of State Secretary.

From the first day of the invasion, the Gestapo began a wave of arrests targeting Czech public activists, called "Operation Bars" – Aktion Gitter. The Nazi policy was oriented towards Germanizing the protectorate and rejecting the Czech nationality and culture. Therefore, from the beginning of the occupation the Czech culture was smothered and the population was terrorized, with the purpose of eliminating the local leadership, with its potential for national and underground resistance.

On 28 October 1939, the anniversary of Czechoslovakia's independence, demonstrations broke out against the occupation, and these were forcefully suppressed. The death of a student injured in the demonstration led to student riots. The Germans brutally suppressed the civil unrest and all universities were closed. In the Albrecht I Operation thousands were arrested, and hundreds of them were sent to concentration camps.

On 24 September 1941 Hitler appointed Heydrich, chief of the Reich Main Security Office, as deputy Reichsprotektor of Bohemia and Moravia and ruler of the protectorate for all purposes. Heydrich acted vehemently to fully "Germanize" the protectorate, "against any attempt at Czech independence", by rejecting all signs of the Czech national government, thwarting possibilities of destructive activity, and its immediate cleansing of Jews. On 27 September 1941 an emergency state was declared in the protectorate, as well as military rule. President Hácha was forced to submit his resignation. Thousands of people were arrested on accusations of treachery, intentional damage, and other crimes. By the end of November 1941, 342 of them had been sentenced to death and executed, including Prime Minister Eliáš, and 1,289 had been handed over to the Gestapo. These immediate steps were intended as a warning against any destructive action and to generate absolute quiet in the protectorate, "to show the Czechs who is the master". Heydrich recognized the need to put the Czech population in the protectorate to work for the German war effort. Special offices were established in order to supervise the forced enlistment at jobs and factories essential for the war effort: those recruited worked in coal mines, steel and metal works, and in the weapons industry or manufacturing for the German army and people. In 1943 the civil industry was closed and 350,000 young Czechs were sent to perform forced labor in Germany. The Czech population suffered severe shortages of products, mainly food.

Following the assassination of Heydrich by two Czech partisans and his death on 4 June 1942, two Czech villages, Lidice and Ležáky, were eliminated in punishment, following the order of K.H. Frank and with Hitler's knowledge. The men were murdered, the women were sent to the Ravensbruck



concentration camp, and approximately one hundred children were sent to Germany to the "racial enhancement" program, to transform them into Germans. A transport of 1,000 Jews from Bohemia, which left Prague on 10 June 1942 for Theresienstadt, was sent directly for extermination in the "East", some to Sobibor and some to Majdanek.

During the entire period of the protectorate, the Czech population suffered a loss of independence and democracy, vicious suppression, the mass annihilation of tens of thousands, until the Red Army entered Prague on 9 May 1945 and ended the German occupation of Bohemia and Moravia.

### The Jews in the protectorate

The declared German goal was a "Judenrein Reich" and therefore, on 15 March 1939, the fate of the 118,310 Jews of Bohemia and Moravia was sealed. These included 30,000 Jewish refugees: 10,000 who had fled Germany, Austria, and Romania, and 20,000 who had been deported from the Sudetenland.

On 21 June 1939 von Neurath published anti-Semitic laws similar to the Nuremberg Laws, which intensified the loathing of the fascist parties towards the Jews. On that day Heydrich instructed that a central agency for Jewish emigration be established in Prague, in charge of taking care of the "Jewish Question" in the protectorate, in order to unite the means and actions taken against the Jews as well as to initiate the removal of the Jews from the Bohemian-Moravian region, their emigration from the Reich, and taking control of their property. On 28 July 1939 Adolf Eichmann was appointed

head of this agency, and he arrived from Vienna with his team of assistants.

In September 1939, when World War II broke out, a change became evident in the atmosphere towards the Jews. Indications of sympathy for Jewish suffering were one of the manifestations of local hatred towards the German occupation. The "arianization" of Jewish factories and their transfer to German hands strengthened the German ethnic foundations of the protectorate and caused considerable damage to Czech national funds as well.

In October 1939, at Eichmann's initiative, two transports of 1,292 Jewish men left Moravská Ostrava as an exploratory force, to establish a transit camp in preparation for deportation of the approximately 5,000 Jews in the protectorate, as well as from Katowice and Vienna, to Nisko, a "Jewish reservation" planned for the Lublin region, while was in fact a one-way ticket.

On 10 October 1941 Heydrich convened the SS heads in the protectorate in Prague to discuss the necessary steps "to solve the question of the Jews in the protectorate and partially in the old Reich". He referred to the fate of the approximately 88,000 Jews living at the time in the protectorate and decided to establish the Theresienstadt Ghetto as a concentration and transit camp for the Jews of Bohemia and Moravia, until these could be sent "Eastwards". In that month, 6,000 Jews from Prague and Brno were already sent directly to Lodz and Minsk, and 73,608 Jews from the protectorate were sent to the Theresienstadt Ghetto, which existed from 24 November 1941 until its liberation on 8 May 1945. Of these, only some 7,500 survived. ■

**We are endeavoring to lead the educational center forward and adapt it to the needs of the younger generation through experiential and challenging learning that requires the development of applications and the purchase of suitable technological equipment.**

**We would appreciate your assistance and support, all donations are welcome and will meet with our heartfelt gratitude!**

**Bank account for donations  
10-953-74803/11**



The cat Kuchichka (in memory of Esther Vider, nicknamed "Kuchka") / Dorit Vidar



We always knew that a very special "treasure" was kept hidden in one of mother's dresser drawers. This "treasure" was very dear to her and once in a while she would take it out from among the piles of socks and show it to us excitedly. It was a blackish-grey cat with a fairly sad face, cut out of yellowing cardboard pages and decorated with tiny-delicate drawings, painted in magnificent water colors. The yellowing pages bore sentences in Czech (which we didn't understand). This cat was extremely precious to my mother.

Mother's maiden name was Edita (Dita) Katz (Katz in German means cat). Because of her surname and her declared love of cats, her friends called her "Kuchka" (cat) and sometimes "Kuchichka" (kitty). Her friends at the Theresienstadt camp (Honza Bermer, Ruth Bondy, and artist Mausie Mausner) had prepared the cat-shaped booklet for her on the occasion of her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.

For mother's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday my brother in law, David Kindler, made her a splendid printed album with photographs from various periods in her life, including photos with friends from the Hachshara and photos of the cat she had received from them at Theresienstadt for her birthday. About five years later, after she died, he expanded the album and included in it, among other things, a Hebrew translation of the cat pages. At first he tried to translate the Czech text with Google Translate but, not satisfied with the result, he sent my sister and me to mother's "Czech friends" for help.

Mother had kept this cat from harm among her few possessions at the Theresienstadt Ghetto, and brought it with her in her suitcase when she immigrated to Israel in 1949 together with my father, the late Max Vider, among the founders of Beit Theresienstadt at Givat Haim Ihud.

Mother died on 16 February 2017. Recently, my sister and I found the strength to go over her possessions. When we opened one of the drawers, the blackish cat peered out at us from among mother's colorful silk kerchiefs. The text, written in Czech, was kindly translated for us by the late Hanna Weingarten and by Dita Ramon (sister of Ruth Bondy).

**We thank them both very much!**



The following is a casual translation of the "cat pages":

1: Kochichka travelled from

Budějovice to the 'hachshara' at Taltin, the Garden of Eden at Ortoince, and later to the dark black shadow of the Theresienstadt Ghetto".



4: "All night, dreaming of the Land of Israel and of working on the kibbutz. In the evening the sun shines like lightning, the Arabs shoot, the Jews suffer, not a dull moment."



2: "At this time we are at a junction:  
To the left towards the AKB transport  
(AKB was the number of the train



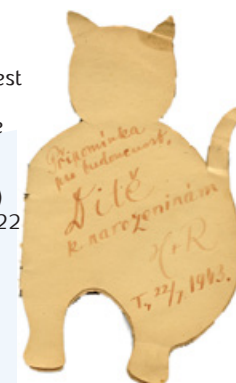
5: "But meanwhile the ship is waiting, the passengers crowd together, with suitcases and blankets. 'Senda, Eva, Rutke, Roda, Honza, and Kraus, get up on deck!' (and in Hebrew it says – see you later!)"



3: "This is the home of the cat Kuchka on 82 Linka St., in the city of Budějovice. On the fire, boiling in the pot, is a tasty roast in Spätzle sauce; the mere thought of it now is enough to boil the blood in your veins!! On Sunday there are walks to the lake in nearby Zadrab."

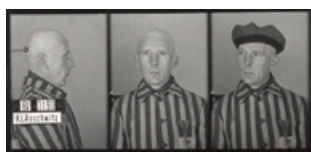


6: "To Dita, on your birthday, best greetings and a memento for the future, from R+H (Honza Bermer and Ruth Bondy) Theresienstadt, 22 July 1943."





## The Heroic Hamburg Kapo Willy Brachmann



In the survivor testimonies about the Theresienstadt Family Camp in Auschwitz we often find mentions of Willy Brachmann. Most prisoners agreed that, compared

to other kapos, he was a decent man. According to eyewitnesses, he even saved lives of some Jewish prisoners.

Born in 1903 in Hamburg in a working class family, Willy grew up in difficult circumstances. During the hunger years of First World War he started stealing food to support his mother, like many other German teenagers. He was arrested for the first time at 14 years; his rap sheet was to grow over two pages. He trained as a painter and in 1926, married Luise Henze; one year later, his only daughter Irmgard was born. The Brachmanns had a tough time during the economical crisis, depended on the social support, Luise suffered from tuberculosis, and Willy provided by stealing and concealment of stolen goods. His were petty thefts: he pilfered two kilograms coffee or bucket of coals. In 1933, hoping for a new beginning, he joined the Nazi Party. However, just a year later he was expelled, because he stole bicycles and sold them to his NSDAP colleagues. Brachmann continued moving in and out of prison. That ended in 1938: the Nazis adopted a law about "habitual criminals", according to which people who were sentenced more than three times, rather than let go, were sent directly from prison to concentration camp. They were the prisoners carrying the black triangle, the "criminals."

Brachmann went through the Emsland camps, Sachsenhausen, and in August 1940, was sent to Auschwitz. His wife divorced him. In Auschwitz, Brachmann worked in street construction and painter commando. Once, after stealing food for himself and his friends, he was caught and tortured in the infamous punishment block (Bunker). In September 1943, he became kapo in the Theresienstadt Family Camp. In the brutal world of Auschwitz, many prisoners recalled him as helpful, even kind. He brought food to a pregnant prisoner, and recalled how it was when his wife was expecting. Hugo Lengsfeld (later Pavel Lenek), who was part of the Communist group in the Family Camp, recalled that Brachmann knew about their meetings, and covered them.

In the Family Camp, Brachmann met the Brno artist Dina Gottlieb, who decorated the children's barrack with drawings from Walt Disney films. She was also forced to draw portraits of Mengele Romani victims. Gottlieb, who was young and beautiful, became Brachmann's lover; fifty years later she recalled how she grew to love him. She arranged for Brachmann to get dentures; he lost his teeth in the years in the camps. Gottlieb introduced him to the 12-year old Míša Grünwald from Prague, who became Brachmann's runner.

Míša is still alive and lives in Indianapolis as Frank Grünwald. He recalls: "I worked as his messenger and spent most of each day doing errands [...]. On July 6th 1944 the Czech Family Camp was being liquidated and all the prisoners had to go through a physical selection performed and directed by Dr. Josef Mengele. When Dr. Mengele saw me, he directed me to the left side of his

table and I was standing in a group of younger (under the age of fourteen) boys. [...] After standing there for a few minutes, Willy Brachmann suddenly appeared and quickly pushed me into an older group of boys [...] that [...] stood about twenty feet from the younger group. Shortly after that, we were instructed to walk to camp B2D (which was a men's camp). In B2D, Willy Brachmann arranged for me to be placed in a barrack which was a clinic occupied by several Polish physicians – two of them being dentists. (The other boys were put into what was called the "punishment barrack" controlled by a very strict and brutal Kapo whose name was Bednarek.) In the clinic, I was under the care of the two dentists and I was much safer there than I would have been in the punishment barrack. I stayed there till the evacuation of Auschwitz, the second week of January 1945." Most of the remaining prisoners in the Family Camp, including Grünwald's brother and mother, were murdered in the gas chamber in the following days.

In fall 1944, Brachmann was sent to Gleiwitz satellite camp, and from there to Groß-Rosen. When he was sent on a death march to Bergen-Belsen, he escaped and returned to his home city of Hamburg, where he was liberated by the British Army. Weeks later, when the 19-year old Kurt Cierer (later Yaakov Tsur) found himself in Hamburg, a fellow survivor told him to look for Brachmann. Cierer called up his old kapo, who offered him shelter for a few weeks. "All he could offer me was tea with artificial sweetener," Yaakov recalled with a chuckle fifty years later.

Willy and Luise remarried. Soon, he ended up in prison again, for theft; his remark about previous convictions said simply "Auschwitz." Later, he worked again as painter, and when his health started failing, following a heart attack, he applied, without success, for reparations as a victim of the Nazi regime. However, German Wiedergutmachung was reserved only for people who were persecuted for racial, religious, or political reasons. Brachmann testified at the Auschwitz trial in Frankfurt/Main against his former tormentors. His daughter emigrated to Australia, where all his three grandchildren live today. Brachmann died in 1982 and is buried in the Öjendorf cemetery.

When we write history of the Holocaust, far too often we forget the little people like Brachmann, who became criminals out of poverty. They were deported, without any legal recourse, to concentration camps. After the war, with broken health, they had no access to reparations. Unlike many other "habitual criminals", pushed by the perpetrators, Brachmann did not lose his humanity and helped wherever he could. This is why we should recognize his valor. Together with Frank Grünwald and a colleague from Yad Vashem, I am working on having Brachmann recognized as Righteous among the Nations.

If you remember Brachmann and could contribute with recollections about him in the Family Camp, please let me know.

**Dr Anna Hájková**

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The task of commemorating the Holocaust is now passing from the first to the following generations. We are charged with continuing to bear the torch of memory. We invite you to join the association and to realize the vision of the founders.

"...We sought to build a house where life would go on, where young people would study and read, within which people would sit and talk to each other..."



**Membership Dues for 2019: 70\$ single, 100\$ couples**

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- By transfer to the account of the association: Bank Leumi 10, Hadera branch 953, Account no. 74803/11

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