

Dapei Keshet

Beit Theresienstadt Theresienstadt Martyrs Remembrance Association

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Trude Groag, Dreath Marches, Ghetto Theresienstadt 1942-1945

75 years to the arrival of the death
marches at Ghetto Theresienstadt



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Hilda Zadikow, Flower with Butterfly, Theresienstadt Ghetto 1942-1945

To all members and friends of Beit Theresienstadt



The recent period has been full of uncertainty in various spheres. More than a year without a functioning government, and in addition the outbreak of the Corona pandemic, have deeply affected activities at Beit Theresienstadt. The budget we made so many

efforts to obtain from the Ministry of Education was cut and we are still waiting for the 2019 allocation, Israeli and German student encounters scheduled for the Passover vacation have been cancelled, and we were forced to postpone the "Tree of Life march" project, which was to have included a special seminar in the Czech Republic. We are of course not the only ones contending with these problems, many organizations in the Israeli economy and particularly non-profit associations have been affected.

But there are also positive points, and one of these is the encounter for future generations held at Beit Theresienstadt in late January. The purpose of the conference was to reach members of the third and fourth generation and connect them to our activities, check what contents would interest them and how they see the future of the place. The response was beyond all expectations. More than 100 people attended, including survivors, children, and grandchildren of all ages, from members of the first generation in their 90s to high school students. The event was moving and exhilarating and subsequently contacts are being maintained, a program built, and many of the participants have agreed to help in areas with which they have an affinity.

Important progress was achieved with regard to the archives. As of the beginning of February, it is possible to access the archives' computerized system through the Beit Theresienstadt website, in order to search for items and information. We are still at the beginning and items remain to be sorted and improved before they are offered to the public, but every day

more and more items are added to the database. The archives staff, headed by Dr. Tereza Maizels, is engaged in recording the items, organizing and completing the information. This, while also inventorying the items in the collections room and their condition. This is a good opportunity to ask once again – **if you have any documents or items from the Theresienstadt Ghetto, the best place to preserve them for future generations is the Beit Theresienstadt archives, where they will be treated properly and serve as an eternal memory.**

The current issue of the Dapei Keshet marks 75 years since liberation of the ghetto. One of the significant events in that period was the arrival of the death marches at the Theresienstadt Ghetto, by vehicle and on foot. The meaning was terrible – beyond the horrendous sight of corpse-filled train cars, those camp survivors who managed to reach the ghetto alive brought with them awful news of the fate of those who had been sent to the "East", as well as the typhus epidemic that continued to take its toll until after liberation in May. The article by Dr. Margalit Shlain brings their story.

Several dear friends, founders of Beit Theresienstadt, have lately departed from us at a ripe old age: the late Alisa Schiller who managed Beit Theresienstadt and was active until recently, even when she had to work from home; the late Peter Lang, who served in various roles, gave testimony to groups, and visited Beit Theresienstadt every week until close to his death. Alisa and Peter were the last survivors of Theresienstadt at Givat Haim Ihud. Their love of life and vitality in old age, despite their physical limitations, were amazing to me. With their departure, an era has come to an end. The late Chava Livni, known for her many years of dedication by translating into English, together with her husband Maxi, and for her considerable contribution to the activities of Beit Theresienstadt, has also left us. May their memory be a blessing.

I wish you all good health and a Happy Passover.

Yours, Tami Kinberg



Intergenerational conference

This past Chanukah we gathered for Beit Theresienstadt's traditional intergenerational conference.

The book "Place of the forgotten children", written about the Jewish children's home that existed on 24 Hans Thoma St. in Frankfurt, was launched at the event. The children's home was founded in 1918 by the Society for Jewish Women in Frankfurt and operated until September 1942 when all residents of the home, both staff and children, were deported to the Theresienstadt Ghetto.



Nona Choir



Meir Ariel

The exhilarating event was attended by family of the children's home residents, German priest Volker Mahnkopp, who conducted the research that uncovered the story, Ronit Shimoni, who researched and gathered a great deal of information about the occupants, survivors of the Theresienstadt Ghetto and their families, and members of the association. After lighting the Chanukah candles Daniel Ariel, son of Ines (Inga Grinwald), spoke about his mother, the writing of the book, and commemoration of the children's home. Father Volker Mahnkopp spoke about the motivation for his study, and Danny Hirschberg spoke about the tragedy of German Jewry after the Nazi rise to power. In the musical part of the evening, the children of the Nona Choir from Maagan Michael sang beautifully, and in conclusion Pavel Koren led a rousing sing-along. ■

International Holocaust Day

This year we chose to mark International Holocaust Day by screening the film "My German Children" and an encounter with the film's director, Tom Pauer.

The film tells the story of a 14-year-old boy and 6-year-old girl who were taken from their daily life in Germany, their homeland, and came to Israel with their mother (Tom Pauer) to get to know her beloved homeland. Side by side with the children's attempt to adjust to Israeli reality, the film exposes the family history gently and caringly, touching on the subjects of roots, identity, homeland and Germany's place in the Israeli milieu. Tom is a relative of Zvi Cohen, a survivor of Theresienstadt ghetto and a member of the association.

After the film, a discussion was held with Tom Pauer on her identity as an Israeli and German and the changes that occurred since the film was made. ■



Left to Right: Tami Kinberg, Zvi Cohen, Tom Pauer, Erela Talmi



Conference of the Future Generations

On the last Friday of January 2020, a conference of the future generations was held at Beit Theresienstadt. More than one hundred people, members of the second and third generation, attended and participated in a debate held around round tables on the issue of our personal responsibility for shaping the memory of the Holocaust and Beit Theresienstadt's role in this context.

MK Elazar Stern, a second-generation Holocaust survivor, spoke at the beginning of the event and shared with the audience his perspective on memory of the Holocaust.

Ronit Raviv professionally led a debate around round tables. In the first part of the debate, each participant said a few words about himself and how he or she is associated with the story of the Theresienstadt Ghetto. Then, the participants were divided into groups by fields of interest in order to discuss



MK Elazar Stern

the tools and possibilities available to each of them to contribute according to their fields of interest.

At the conclusion of the event Zvi Cohen, a survivor of the Theresienstadt Ghetto, played the harmonica together with Pavel Koren – all those attending were moved by their music.

Danny Shek, Deputy Chairman of Beit Theresienstadt's Governing Council, summarized the conference and said that the topic of preserving the memory of the Holocaust with the assistance of the second and third generations and those to follow, is extremely important and must be encouraged within the history of the Jewish people.■



Encounter between "Amcha" and the Shafririm School

In January 2020, a special and inspiring encounter was held at Beit Theresienstadt between students of the Shafririm Bet school and Holocaust survivors, members of the "Amcha" Club in Netanya.

For the encounter, the students prepared a rich and pampering breakfast, sat together with the Holocaust survivors around round tables, and finally sang and danced together to music played by Yehuda Kanias.



Beit Theresienstadt has been maintaining a productive cooperation with the "Amcha" Association – The Israel Support Center for Holocaust Survivors, for several years. This is the second year that students of the Shafririm school have held a joint experiential activity with "Amcha" Netanya.

As part of the cooperation, we are working on a fascinating series of encounters intended for the second generation, which will begin in the next school year (2020/21).■



Yehuda Kanias

Torch lighters

Ilana Kirshner

Ilana Kirshner was born Jana Barber in 1931 in Moravska Ostrava, Czechoslovakia, an only daughter to her parents, Gerta and Heinrich. At age six she was sent to a Jewish school, which she attended until it was closed in 1941.



In late June 1943 she was sent to the Theresienstadt Ghetto along with her parents. Sixteen months later, in October 1944, Ilana and her mother were deported to Auschwitz. From there, they were transferred to the Mauthausen concentration and labor camp in Austria. Ilana, her mother and aunt, were taken to a nearby town to work in a factory. Due to her young age, Ilana worked within the camp as a shoemaker.

In March 1945 the three women contracted typhus. Ilana's mother did not recover and when the camp was liberated in May 1945 Ilana remained with her mother. About a month and a half after the end of World War II, Ilana's mother died. Ilana returned to Prague, where she met her father who had survived, and together they returned to Ostrava, only to find that her entire family, aside from her maternal grandmother, had been murdered at Treblinka and Auschwitz.

In 1949 Ilana immigrated to Israel where she met Gideon, who had immigrated from Berlin with his family in 1938. They married and in 1950 their daughter Edna was born. After learning Hebrew Ilana worked as a Hebrew, English, and German secretary in industry and lived in Haifa. In 1995 the family moved to Kfar Saba, where Ilana volunteered for twenty years at the National Insurance Institute, the Civilian Consulting Service, and a municipal old age home. In 2013 Ilana was granted the Geller Award for her many years of volunteer work.

Ilana has three grandsons, two great-granddaughters, and two great-grandsons. ■

Hana Sternlicht

Hana was born in Prague, Czechoslovakia, in 1930, an only daughter of Arnold Neumann and Irenna née Katzir. Until age 9 Hana enjoyed a happy childhood in a small and loving family.



When the Germans occupied Czechoslovakia in 1939 and the anti-Jewish laws were publicized, her childhood came to an end. Hana was expelled from school and for about three years she remained at home.

In December 1942 the family was deported to the Theresienstadt Ghetto. Upon arrival they were separated, and at first Hana lived with her mother in the women's quarters. Later, Hana was transferred to the L-410 children's quarters, where she was housed with girls her age.

In October 1944, a week after her father was sent to the East, Hana and her mother were deported too. Undergoing selection at the camp, the two were separated and Hana's mother was murdered. After about two weeks at the camp, Hana was transferred to the Freiberg labor camp in Germany, where she worked in a factory that manufactured aircraft components.

Six months later she was sent to the Mauthausen camp in Austria. On May 5, 1945, she was liberated at the camp by the American army.

At the conclusion of the war, Hana returned to Prague but found none of her family.

In March 1949 she immigrated to Kibbutz Hahotrim with the "Dror" movement and subsequently married Dov Sternlicht. Hana and Dov have two children and six grandchildren. ■

Micha Glass

Micha Glass was born in 1932 in Brno, Czechoslovakia, to his parents Egon and Francesca. Two years later his brother Dan was born. In 1939, in the second grade, he was expelled from school for being Jewish, and his family was forced to leave Brno and move to the village of Bosonohy.



When Micha was 9, his parents were arrested for engaging in underground activity. Micha relates that at that moment he grew ten years older in 10 minutes. After his parents were arrested, Micha took his younger brother to the house of the priest who had collaborated with his father in the underground activities. They were hidden in the church.

Once the immediate danger had passed, the priest contacted the children's aunt and uncle, who took them in. About six months later, their mother was released and she took charge of the children. They lived in an apartment with several other Jewish families until March 27, 1942 when Micha, his brother and mother were sent to the Theresienstadt Ghetto.

At the Ghetto, Micha was sent to the children's block Q609, while his brother remained with their mother due to his young age. The family remained in the ghetto until it was liberated by the Red Army. At the end of the war, the family returned to Brno and in 1949 they immigrated to Israel. Francesca, who had been a well-known photographer in Brno, opened a photography studio in Jerusalem. She passed away in Jerusalem in 1994.

Micha worked for the Broadcasting Authority as a sound technician for 40 years until retiring. He now lives with his wife Daniela in Jerusalem. Micha and Daniela have three children and 9 grandchildren. ■

Zippora Hochman

Zippora (Olga) Taub was born in 1925 in the town of Bački Petrovac in northeast Yugoslavia to her parents, Viktor and Clara. In 1941, when the Germans occupied Yugoslavia, her father was recruited to the army as a veterinary for the cavalry battalion. Several weeks later, he was captured by the Germans and sent to a prisoner of war camp in Germany. In March



1944, with the German occupation, the Jews were ordered to wear a yellow star. About three weeks later Zippora, her mother and brother Michael, 8 years younger than her, were sent to the ghetto in the city of Baja, Hungary. About one month later, in May 1944, the family was deported to Auschwitz. Upon arriving at the camp they were separated. Zippora became an inmate of the camp and her mother and brother were sent to the gas chambers. After a few weeks in Auschwitz Zippora was sent, together with another 200 women, to the town of Reichenbach in Germany, where she was placed at a factory that manufactured submarine parts. In March 1945, after the factory was bombed, Zippora was transferred to the town of Parschnitz, where she was put to work digging anti-tank ditches.

In early May 1945 the Russians liberated the camp. After liberation, Zippora travelled to Bratislava, where she recovered in a building belonging to the Jewish community. She then learned that in March 1945 her father had returned from the prisoner of war camp. Zippora returned to her original town and met her father. Of the approximately one hundred Jews who had been living in Bački Petrovac before the war, only eleven survived.

The next year, Zippora completed her high school studies and studied agriculture at a university in Belgrade. In December 1948 Zippora immigrated to Israel and in January 1949 she arrived at Kibbutz Givat Haim. Later on she married a member of the kibbutz, Ephraim Broder. Zippora has remained in Givat Haim Mehuad to this day.

Zippora has one daughter, three grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren. ■

Eva Hefer

Eva was born in Třinec, Czechoslovakia in 1928, to her parents Jan and Růžena Měkyn, the younger sister of Hanna and Zadenk. In 1939, when the area where the family lived was occupied, the children were transferred to central Czechoslovakia and later the entire family moved to Ostrava and Frýdek-Místek. In September 1942 Eva, of the entire family, received a summons to report for a transport to Theresienstadt. Accompanied by her father and brother, she came to the gathering point with her belongings. The day after arriving at Theresienstadt, Eva received a summons to a transport Eastwards, however a woman at the ghetto who heard her story suggested that she appeal the summons to the altestenrat – which Eva did and her name was erased from the transport. Years later she learned that the transport had been destined for the Treblinka extermination camp.



In the ghetto Eva was housed in the L-410 children's block, where she remained until the end of the war.

Eva's sister Hanna was deported to the ghetto in December 1944 and her mother in February 1945. At the end of the war the three returned to the family home in Frýdek-Místek, where her father, brother, and brother-in-law were waiting for them. In 1948 Eva married and moved to Prague. In January 1949 Eva and her husband immigrated to Israel and arrived at Kibbutz Givat Haim. Years later Eva left the kibbutz, worked as a nurse at a hospital, and lived in Magdiel. Eva remarried Arie Hefer, among the founders of Kibbutz Givat Haim, and returned to the kibbutz. In 1973 the couple moved to Beer Sheva and later to Tel Aviv, where she lives to this day.

Eva and Arie, who passed away in 1996, have a son, three grandchildren, and are expecting a great-grandchild. ■

Kurt Stern

Kurt Stern, an only child, was born on April 12, 1929, in the city of Chodov, Czechoslovakia. His father, Julius Stern, born in 1904 in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, died of tetanus in 1935, when Kurt was 6 years old. His mother, Arna Kronberger Stern, was born in the Czech Republic in 1903.



After the Germans occupied the Sudetenland in 1938, Kurt and his mother fled to a small town near Prague. In May 1939 Arna and her brother Walter managed to include (10-year-old) Kurt and his (12-year-old) Cousin Ruthie in the list of 669 children approved for transfer to England.

The rest of the family was deported to the Theresienstadt Ghetto after the Nazi occupation, from whence they were sent to the Auschwitz death camp, where they were all murdered. The kindertransport was organized by volunteers, and the initiator and living spirit of the enterprise to save the children was a young British man named Nicholas Winton, who was later knighted and became Sir Nicholas Winton.

When Kurt arrived in England together with his cousin Ruth, they were taken in by Mr. and Mrs. Nunn, the husband a farmer and the wife a teacher, Christians who lived in northeast England in the village of Red Grave. Kurt lived there until age 15. Kurt received the terrible news of the death of his mother Arna and the rest of the family from the Nunn family. In 1944 Kurt moved to London, where he studied to be a pastry chef and lived in a youth hostel for Czech refugees.

In 1948 he volunteered in Mahal (the IDF program for foreign volunteers), joined the army, and served in the Golani Brigade. As a soldier in the reserves, Kurt fought in the Six Day War and in the Yom Kippur war in the central command section.

In 1952 Kurt married Aliza, they had two children: Yoel-Julius and Arna. In the 1950s, Kurt and Aliza travelled to Zurich, Switzerland, and then to London, where he studied to be a pastry chef and became an expert in sugar and marzipan constructions. Upon returning to Israel, Kurt worked as a pastry chef at several hotels, and then opened his own business. For his sugar creations he won prizes in Israel and overseas.

In 1968 Kurt decided to change professions and became a tour guide in English and German, a profession he loved. He worked as a guide for many years.

Kurt has 2 children, one granddaughter and 4 grandsons, and one great-granddaughter.

This month Kurt celebrated his 91st birthday, may he live to 120, or as he prefers to say, "to 100 like 20". ■

Impressions from the Journey to Poland / Amit Bagienski

My name is Amit Bagienski, 18 years old, and I am a third generation Holocaust survivor, the granddaughter of Holocaust survivor Achim Bagienski who was at the Theresienstadt camp for 3 years, from age 5 to 8.

I first encountered grandfather's story at kindergarten in Michmoret. On Holocaust Day my grandfather came to tell the story of his life at the camp (adjusted for our age). I was 5 or 6 years old but I remember two of the stories that he told us. The first was that grandfather did not go to kindergarten like us; he roamed the streets of the camp in search of food for himself and his family. I remember grandfather telling us that he would take a stick with a nail attached and stick it through ventilation holes in the buildings to try and catch vegetables and steal food.



The second story I remember is that grandfather spoke about the food and the amount of food they were given. I remember myself as a child in kindergarten not understanding how soup can be made from potato peels or how a family can survive on one loaf of bread. As far as I knew, every day I had breakfast, lunch, and supper, and as a child it is very hard to understand this.

Seven years later grandfather came to my elementary school in Kfar Yona. I was in sixth grade by then. I remember that grandfather told his story and I discovered more and more details that I had never heard. I began to try and contain it all or even simply understand the pain he had felt at being separated from his brother and the need to abruptly take leave of his father. It was impossible to understand, impossible to take in, but grandfather did not speak much, it was hard for him.

In 2015 grandfather and grandmother decided to take the entire family, their children, children-in-law, and all the grandchildren, for a trip to get to know grandfather's roots in Berlin. We were in Berlin for a week, and every day we went to see parts of grandfather's journey as a child. One day we went to Platform 17, from where trains had departed for the ghettos, death camps, and concentration camps. We also went to grandfather's street and reached the building where he had lived. At the entrance are stumbling stones bearing the names of grandfather's father and two brothers.

One day we went to Villa Wannsee. At that place something occurred that I remember to this day. Grandfather told us, face to face, about his father and about the speed at which he was taken away without saying goodbye. There, for the first time in my life, I saw grandfather break down, I saw him cry and I cried with him. It is hard to explain the thoughts and feelings that go through your mind. In Berlin we heard for the first time about the absorption difficulties in Israel, how hard it was to find a place for themselves, feelings of being different, that no one was listening to them and there is no one to speak to because no one accepts them.



Amit with her grandparents: Bella and Achim

Four years later it was my turn, after my older brother Tal and my cousin Matan, to go on the journey to Poland. I went on this journey with an open mind, with an empty mind, because all I wanted was to learn and remember those moments there. I went on the journey with my mother. Mother made the trip for the first time and we went together to experience and understand together and of course each separately as well. We began the journey in Cracow, saw the Old City. We visited the Cracow Ghetto and heard about the Jewish congregation in Cracow. And then, on the second day, we went to Auschwitz and Birkenau.

I lack the words to explain what I experienced there. I cried and smiled and cried again and tried to take in what I had seen, but it was impossible. We saw the book of names in block 27. Mother and I stood there and found grandfather's surname. We both stood there with tears in our eyes, tears of sadness but also tears of victory that we were standing on Polish territory with our heads held high, saying that we are proud of our family, of grandfather, of the nation, of grandfather's sister Esther.

The journey continued and our feelings abounded with it. The hardest day for me was the visit to Majdanek. There everything opened up, my heart, mind, soul, and I couldn't stop crying. I tried once again to take it in but couldn't. At the ceremony at Majdanek I read a piece about a child called Henio Żytomirski. Henio was murdered at Majdanek at the age of 9, and the only thing I could think about was my grandfather. My grandfather Achim, whose fate could have been like that of Henio. My grandfather is a hero and each of the children murdered was a hero and every person who survived the Holocaust is for me a hero, but grandfather Achim is one and only and he is my hero. Here is a quote from my post on Facebook: "I heard grandfather's story many times before going on the journey to Poland, but only at the moment I embarked on this journey did I understand that it is not only words uttered by grandfather, not only another story, it's his victory, it's the journey he travelled together with his mother and sister, the journey that led him to life! The journey that led him to triumph over the atrocities". I am proud of my family. I am proud of my grandfather and, mainly, I am proud of myself. I am proud that I had the privilege of being raised in a loving and supportive family and happy that I have the privilege to hear stories, while in a few years there will be no one to tell them, and most important – I'm proud that I'm a third generation of Holocaust survivor Achim Bagienski! ■

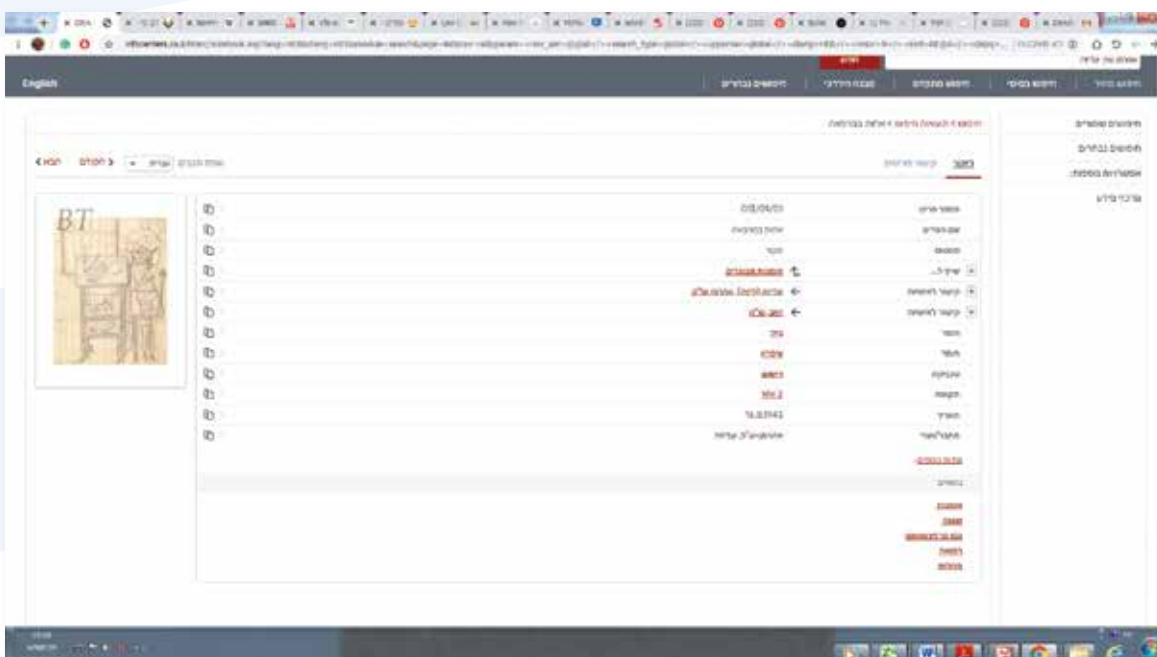
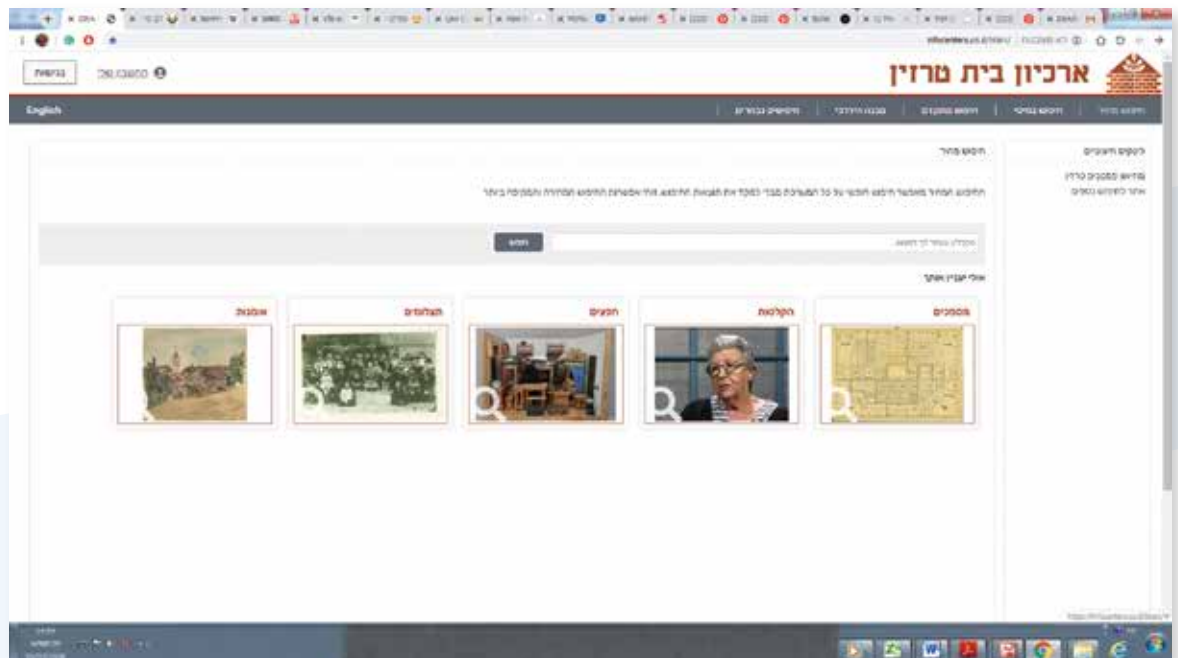
The Beit Theresienstadt Archives proudly present

The archives staff is happy to announce that Beit Theresienstadt's collections are now publicly accessible. The online archives can be accessed through the Beit Theresienstadt website or at: <https://infocenters.co.il/btarc/>. Public access to the archives is the product of lengthy and hard work by the archives staff over a long period. At the same time, it must be noted that the materials are being uploaded gradually. Access is provided at the moment only to a small part of the archives' art and object collection. Some of the items have been fully catalogued, including visual display and information, while others are only partially catalogued. The collection was divided into the following categories: art, objects, documents, photographs, and recordings.

The archive cards provide information about the item as well as information on the item's author/manufacturer (if known). In addition, through the "link to details" it is possible to view a list of additional items related to the same author/manufacturer and/or to the same item.

In addition to these collections, a list of names and basic data about the ghetto inmates (based on information in the inmates index) has been uploaded to the website, where information on the ghetto's inmates can be sought.

The archives staff is making every effort to upload the materials as accurately as possible. If you have any additional information please contact the archives. ■



Visit by Michaela (Lauscher) Vidlakova

In early March Michaela Vidlakova, daughter of Irma and Jiri (Georg) Lauscher, visited Beit Theresienstadt. Michaela came to Beit Theresienstadt to see the museum's exhibits and to gather materials for the educational activities that she has been holding in the Czech Republic and Germany for many years. Michaela, a survivor of the Theresienstadt Ghetto, is active in the field of education and Holocaust commemoration and tells her story and that of the ghetto to schoolchildren and to adult audiences. In this, Michaela is continuing the heritage of her parents who were active in these areas.

Michaela's mother, Irma Lauscher (1904-1985), studied education and psychology at the Charles University in Prague. Even before graduating she began to teach at a Jewish school on Yechimova St. and after the prohibition against attending school she continued to teach small groups of students in private homes.

Jiri Lauscher (1901-1989), Michaela's father, began working at a carpentry shop after being fired from his job at a firm that manufactured fur coats. The carpentry specialized, among other things, in manufacturing children's dolls.

The couple were members of the Zionist movement "Tchelet Lavan" (Blau-Weiss). In the second half of the 1920s Jiri travelled to Palestine and was among the founders of Kibbutz Sarid. Contracting malaria, he returned to Prague and planned to immigrate to the Land of Israel, but did not manage to do so and the family remained in Prague.

In December 1942 the family was deported to the Theresienstadt Ghetto. Already at the gathering point in Prague, Irma began to draw all the children together in an attempt to distract them from what was happening around them. In the ghetto Irma continued to work in education, among other

things as a counselor in the girls' dorm and then in the day care center.

Jiri was sent to work in the artists' workshop, where the workers copied fine art, produced frames, children's toys, etc. He got the job after displaying a Pluto doll he had made for his daughter. After a short while, he was transferred to the carpentry shop and also worked in construction.

In October 1944 Jiri was supposed to have been deported to Auschwitz but, luckily, before the train left one of the roofs in the ghetto was destroyed in a storm and needed urgent fixing. One of the German commanders



Michaela and her mother Irma

demanded that the job be carried out by the ghetto's construction workshop and he was told that all the workers had been sent to the train East. In response, the German commander decided to take all the workshop workers off the transport, including Jiri Lauscher. The family remained in the ghetto until its liberation by the Red Army in May 1945.

After liberation, the family returned to Prague. Jiri, together with Zeev Shek, Ruth Bondy, and others, collected documentary materials from the ghetto as part of the documenting enterprise (1945-1946).

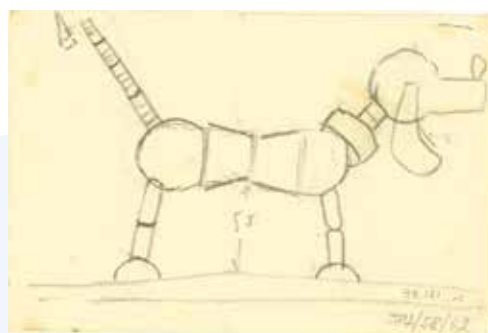
Later, Jiri began work at the Israeli embassy. In the 1950s the family tried to flee communist Czechoslovakia, but they were caught and sent to prison. When they were released Jiri returned to work at the Israeli embassy, and when he retired he continued to collect documents and items from the ghetto for the Beit Theresienstadt archives.

In her visit to Beit Theresienstadt, Michaela Lauscher reviewed various materials in the Beit Theresienstadt archives and added information and stories on various items. One of these was a drawing she had made in the ghetto, describing her encounters with her father.

It all began when Michaela was in the ghetto hospital. Her parents wanted to visit her but were not allowed to enter



Irma and Jiri (Georg) Lauscher





Michaela's drawing

and could only see Michaela through the window. To make Michaela aware that her parents were waiting for her outside her father would whistle. The whistle was the sound made by a small bird that Michaela and her father had heard in the past. Her father had told her that it was a pretty and uncomplicated tune and that Michaela should learn the whistle, which would become their signal.

In the drawing you can see a girl whistling a tune, the notes CEGCGG under the window of a barracks, of which one window is marked "father's window", and on the nearby tree is a small black bird tweeting the tune. This whistle became a family signal that accompanied all members of the family during their time as inmates at the Theresienstadt Ghetto. ■



Scan to see Michaela Vidlakova testimony



Left to Right: Tami Kinberg, Michaela Vidlakova, Liora Livni Cohen

the Theresienstadt Ghetto from the Sered camp), sent us an excerpt from his father's memoirs and asks that anyone who has additional information about this matter or the name of the son of Bujna (Buji) Tyroler, as well as details about his fate, will contact him by e-mail: urjak69@walla.co.il.

"From some of the people from the Sered camp who arrived on the last transport to Theresienstadt I heard about the affair of Mrs. Bujna (Buji) Tyroler. They said that she was about 45 years old, from the region of Bratislava. She was dark-skinned, looked like a gypsy. At the SD headquarters on 6 Adlova St. she was employed in the service of the Germans. It was agreed that she would receive short breaks to roam the streets of Bratislava. If she identified a Jew she would ask him "What is the time?". Then, two SD men hiding close by who would always accompany her in this fashion, would appear. They said that Mrs. Tyroler always went out perfumed and dressed fancily. In this manner, Jews were arrested. Indeed, several hours after Mrs. Tyroler returned from her short "excursions", 6 new Jewish prisoners appeared at the SD headquarters in Adlova. Hence, it appeared that Tyroler was an informer. She innocently thought that if she did the SD a service she would be saved and released. Later, she was transferred to the Sered camp. From the people of Sered who arrived at Theresienstadt on the last transport we heard that Mrs. Tyroler, who was supposed to have come to Theresienstadt with them, was poisoned by the camp's kitchen workers the night before the final deportation to Theresienstadt. When Mrs. Tyroler's son, a handsome 16 year old (who was with us at 6 Adlova and also at Sered) heard of his mother's deeds here in Theresienstadt, he said: "If she was indeed as they say, then she deserved her punishment".

The death marches to Theresienstadt – A chance at life / Dr. Margalit Shlain

From April 20 to May 6, 1945, a wave of transports consisting of more than 13,000 prisoners arrived at the Theresienstadt camp, the last camp to remain standing in Europe. Most of these were Jews who had been evacuated from the concentration camps on the front lines of the military confrontation in Poland, Germany, Austria, and the Czech Republic, before the allied armies reached them. The evacuees brought with them additional hardships and illness to the ghetto in the final weeks before liberation, as well as bringing the isolated ghetto direct testimonies of the extermination. They constituted part of the efforts by Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler to form contacts with the allies in the West and were intended as hostages to be used in defense of "German interests" towards the end of the war.

The prisoners were transported by death marches, under a heavy guard that abused and killed them, in freight trains or on



foot, inhuman conditions that led to the death of many, in the final weeks before liberation. These included 3,000-4,000 Jewish prisoners from

the Buchenwald concentration camp in Germany who were sent to Theresienstadt on April 3 and 5, 1945. They were made to march on foot in the direction of the city of Weimar, where they were loaded on to the cars of a freight train that travelled south towards Theresienstadt. During the journey they were bombed by American planes and subjected to incessant murderous attacks by the guards. After the twelve-day trip, only some 300 remained from a group of about 2,000. Another group was loaded on to open freight cars. After their train was attacked several times from the air, the prisoners continued on foot. Mordechai Shadmi, from Riga, described the last days of this death march:

For several days we walked as if heading for annihilation, with no food and crushed, along the roads of the Sudetenland. Daily, people would fall on the road and we would leave them. The shooting that followed confirmed their verdict... Of the 800 people who set out, 200-250 reached Theresienstadt.

Among the evacuees were also a few inmates of Theresienstadt who had recently been sent to the East. The remaining inmates of the camp were shocked when they learned the fate of those who had been deported; they searched among the new arrivals and asked about their dear ones. Rabbi Leo Baeck related that one day he was called over to a typhus patient who had asked to see him. "I didn't recognize her. When I drew near, her body was excruciatingly thin, but when she spoke I realized that it was Dorothea, my sister's granddaughter. She had been through Auschwitz and had been sent to Theresienstadt from a labor camp near Dachau".

Dealing with the arrival of evacuees from the concentration camps at Theresienstadt

On April 19, 1945 Karl Rahm, commander of the Theresienstadt camp, notified the head of the Council of Elders, Dr. Benjamin Murmelstein, "that the arrival of transports in the next few days from camps that had been liquidated should be taken into account" and instructed him to make the necessary preparations. However, Murmelstein and the Council of Elders, were given no time to prepare. They and all the camp inmates were thrown at once into a pandemonium that brought to the collapse of all previous arrangements at Theresienstadt. The appearance of the camp and its condition were completely transformed and the situation approached anarchy.

The next day, on April 20 towards the evening, the first transport of evacuees arrived, 25 train cars with 1,800 people. As Alisa Ehrmann described in her diary: "The rumor spread quickly throughout the ghetto: 'People from camps!'. When they passed the vegetable garden they called out: 'Auschwitz', 'Birkenau', 'Hanover', 'Buchenwald'... then the heart of the city stopped beating".

The Council of Elders, headed by Murmelstein, was charged with a most difficult task; they had to continue maintaining the camp, while the front line gradually drew closer to Theresienstadt. Every day they had to take in thousands of people in a terrible state – sick, injured, and dying, starved corpses full of lice and covered in tattered rags. The Council of Elders worked day and night.

Receiving those evacuated from the concentration camps at the Theresienstadt Ghetto was accompanied by enormous difficulties. The first of these was the lack of living quarters. Even now the camp commander did not allow use of the large Sudeten and Bodenbach barracks, that remained empty after the central archives of the Reich Main Security Office – RSHA were burned down (having been transferred to Theresienstadt in August 1943 for security reasons), and did not empty the southern barracks of the SS men quartered there, although they were ready to flee. Lacking options, the Council of Elders was compelled to empty the Dresden and Hamburg barracks of their residents in a matter of hours and to enforce even further crowding in the quarters of the existing inmates in order to make room for the evacuees, who were also crowded into the cabins of battery number 15. But this was not enough, the pace of the transports to Theresienstadt increased, so groups of evacuees had to be housed outside or in the underground passages near the walls. The evacuees strongly resisted entering these passages, fearing that they were to be gassed to death only several hours before liberation, and for the same reason they refused to enter the disinfection and bathing facilities and much effort was required to persuade them that bathing would not kill them.

Another grave problem was providing food. There was a great deal of tension between the arrivals and the existing inmates of Theresienstadt concerning the food rations, which escalated to the level of a confrontation. The famished evacuees craved

food, however there was very little in the camp and of poor quality. It was impossible to keep at bay the hungry newcomers who were unable to adjust to the new conditions. In the evening and night of May 2, some of the evacuees broke into the kitchen and destroyed it, wreaked havoc in the pharmacy, robbed the cleaning group's room, demanded food, and would not believe that they were receiving double the rations of the old-time inmates. "Those who did believe, wanted triple rations... they show contempt for justice. They want to eat. We know about your chocolate. We don't want it, only potatoes". The next day they declared a hunger strike.

"No one dares speak up. It immediately leads to violence". They accused Marmelstein and the Czech member of council of elders, Georg Vogel, responsible for maintaining quiet and order in the camp in the interim until liberation, of collaborating with the Germans, "and that they would be accountable for this when the Russians arrive". As Alisa Ehrmann wrote in despair: "It was impossible to convince those who had lost trust in human beings". Among the evacuees who arrived from the concentration camps were also non-Jewish inmates, including dozens of criminals who had collaborated with the SS in the camps and were a hazard, particularly to the women in the camp. In the midst of all this havoc, the Germans usually remained on the sidelines. Council of elders began to separate Jews from non-Jews, to set aside the criminals, and this required a large force of male volunteers in order to maintain quiet and order.

Others among the new arrivals were more appreciative of the extreme difficulties encountered by the former inhabitants. Monik Kaufman, who arrived at Theresienstadt two weeks before liberation, described the welcome and the sense of security he felt at the camp:

It is hard to describe our impression at the first sight of the Jews, Jewish women and children. Many people cried from happiness... We were received courteously and from the first moment we were cared for... while from the first moment they treated us as humans, several hours later they had to change their attitude... because each one of us was an animal ready to devour anyone else for a crumb of bread. How much strength and health was needed by the Jews in Theresienstadt to keep us in order... although until liberation another two weeks passed, we saw no SS and felt safer than on the transport.

On April 24 typhus fever was first discovered among the new arrivals. Council of elders prepared a small number of beds for the sick and allocated a team of doctors, nurses, and aides, but it was too little and not enough to answer the need.

It was not possible to completely separate the masses of new people from the previous inhabitants, who had been relatively healthy until then. As a result of the shortage of medicine and of medical staff and the inability to refresh the lice-infested straw that served people as beds, the typhus spread, turning into an epidemic in the last days before liberation. The only means of treatment was quarantine. By early May 1945 over 40% of the camp's inmates were in quarantine. The state of the

concentration camp evacuees quarantined in the southern cabins and surrounded by barbed wire, was unbearable. No one assumed responsibility for their supervision: "They have no food, they have



nothing. In the morning the sick cabin is half dead and half dying...", but nevertheless, despite the risk to their life, a few of the camp's medical staff volunteered to care for them.

On May 2, Paul Dunant, Special Representative of the International Red Cross, came to live in Theresienstadt and remained there until May 10, 1945.

He stayed at the town hall and held daily meetings with the Council of Elders to solve the immediate problems and prepare for liberation, after the departure of the camp commander and the SS personnel.

On May 5, 1945, news came from Prague that there is fighting with SS and about escapees shot on the road from Theresienstadt to Prague. At the same day a train with the last transport with 1,200 prisoners arrived in Theresienstadt, which also added to the burden of the Jewish self-administration. Alisa Ehrmann wrote in her diary:

"From Buchenwald, Dachau, Ravensbrueck, men and a few women, two cars with children, open cars, ceaselessly pouring rain since the morning. Four from Theresienstadt and mainly Russian prisoners of war, Yugoslavs, Rumanians, Poles, Slovaks, Hungarians, a few Jews, Gypsies, 59 train cars, about 1200 persons, the cars are loaded: 50-80, but a part are almost empty ... The SS men disappear in an instant. Two SS men did not want to go on and surrendered their weapons. The Red Cross did not show up and so we had to do the work ourselves, like always" ... on May 7, the official announcement was received that the war is over, but in Theresienstadt the war was not over yet. On May 8 Theresienstadt became a battleground of the retreating German army. The guns were heard throughout day and night. In the evening, a Russian shell hit one of the houses and several people were injured. Then, a Russian tank entered the ghetto.

On May 9, a medical unit of the Red Army with medical equipment joined the medical team from Prague to take care of the 500 people sick with typhoid fever that were diagnosed in Theresienstadt until May 6, 1945; and of the 2,950 additional patients diagnosed up to May 19. The typhoid epidemic began to recede only after all the typhoid patients were isolated in a hospital. On June 13, 1945, the epidemic was over. 920 people paid with their lives and about a dozen of physicians and nurses. Surviving the death marches of the Jewish inmates evacuated from the concentration camps to Theresienstadt was no guarantee of eventual survival, and even those who managed to reach the camp did not receive proper housing, sufficient food, and suitable protection from the typhus epidemic. However the large majority, about 12,000, managed to reach liberation day. **For them, Theresienstadt was a chance to live, without which it would not have been possible. ■**

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..."



Due to the Coronavirus crisis, Beit Terezin was closed and all operations were stopped.

We fear the fate of Beit Theresienstadt.

Groups of students who are the main visitors in the museum will probably not resume their arrival before the next school year (end of 2020), the special projects and seminars have been canceled.

In these days of uncertainty, your contribution is needed more than ever.

Please help us overcome this difficult period so that Beit Terezin will be able to resume its important educational and commemorative activity as soon as possible.

Any donation is welcome.

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

Membership dues and donations may be remitted:

- By personal check made out to "Beit Theresienstadt", by credit card and Paypal Bank
- By transfer to the account of the association: Bank Leumi 10, Hadera branch 953, Account no. 74803/11

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- Our members in the USA may use the P.E.F. that transfer money to Beit Theresienstadt without commission – such donations are tax-free. Send your check made out to P.E.F. with explicit order to transfer the money to Beit Theresienstadt – its number at the P.E.F. is 2210.

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