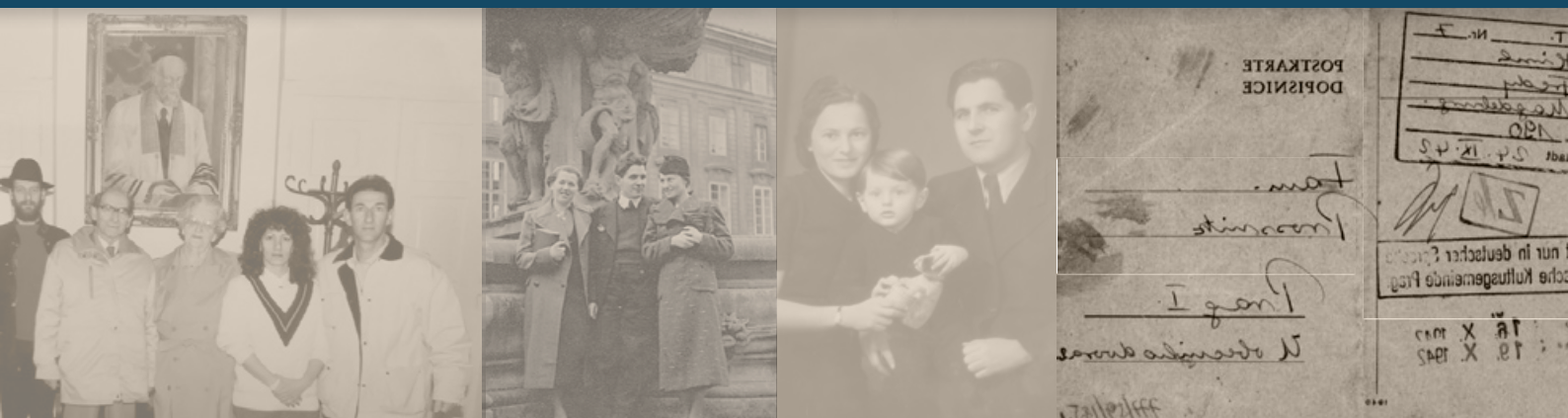


# Dapei Keshar

Beit Theresienstadt Theresienstadt Martyrs Remembrance Association



## Roots and family ties





## IN THIS ISSUE

At Beit Theresienstadt	2	The Tragic Price of Family Cohesion in October 1944	
Yours	3	Transports from Theresienstadt to Auschwitz /	
Words in memory of Prof. Eli Lawental	4	Dr. Margalit Shlain	10-11
Beit Theresienstadt news	5	About Our Brother Amos Steinberg,	
The miracle of the Loaves - Heinz Prossnitz'		a Boy With "Such a Sabra Name" /	
Package Aid	6-7	Leah Shamir Shinan and Prof. Avigdor Shinan	12-13
Corona and Roots / David Magen	8-9	From the archives	14

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M. K.:

### K Novému roku.

*Třebaže jsem ještě malá,  
chovám ve svém srdíčku  
hodně, hodně velkou lásku  
pro Tě, máti, tatičku.*

*Dneska Vás chci potěšit,  
zlibatí Vás nastokrát  
a pro celíčký rok nový  
mnoho štěstí, zdraví přát.*

### L'shanah Tovah,

Happy New Year to all our friends,  
Health, peace and freedom.

Beit Theresienstadt staff



*To a Good Year*

*Although I am still small,*

*My heart is filled*

*With lots and lots of love*

*For you, Mama and Papa.*

*Today I want to make you happy,*

*To give a hundred kisses to you*

*And to the entire New Year, too*

*And to wish you plenty of happiness and health.*

Happy New Year Greetings

From the journal Yaldut (Childhood) No. 2, Page No. 15, 10.31.1932



## To all members and friends of Beit Theresienstadt



About six months ago, when I was writing this section, I had no idea how the Covid-19 crisis that we're dealing with would develop. Optimistically, I hoped that it would pass by the summer, but summer, too, is going by and the crisis is only getting worse. The Israeli cultural

world, including museums, is at an unprecedented low. Luckily for us, the small size of Beit Theresienstadt, which sometimes seemed like a disadvantage, has become an advantage during this period. With careful management, we have reduced the economic damage and even hung onto all of our employees, which after a relatively short period of unpaid leave, returned to their positions. This would not have been possible without the efforts and help of Beit Theresienstadt's friends and the general public in the fundraising campaign to save the museum. This is the place to **thank everyone who contributed and helped**. We found out how dear Beit Theresienstadt is to so many people. Members of Kibbutz Givat Haim Ihud volunteered a large scale to help, continuing-generations, counselors and teachers who work with Beit Theresienstadt, members of the Czech Republic Embassy and various institutions, and the list goes on. It was encouraging and heartwarming and put Beit Theresienstadt back on its feet. **Thank you!**

In these times, when many of us are shut inside our homes whether through choice or not, has brought good things as well. Suddenly we had time, the pressure dropped and the day-to-day race slowed down, freeing people to take care of errands and pick up hobbies. Although visits to the Beit Theresienstadt Museum almost completely stopped, requests from the archive increased significantly. Many people took this time to dig through old photos and documents, research their family history and sort out their family trees. In the issue, you

will find articles on interesting and surprising family stories that have recently been discovered.

In April we sadly parted ways with Eli Lawental who passed away. Eli was chairman of the association for 25 years. His wife Zehava wrote some words in his memory.

Looking ahead, the staff of the educational center is not resting on their laurels. They are vigorously preparing an online curriculum, which will help us to reach schools virtually, as they will probably not be going on outings this year. We have also prepared a program for schools that will not be going to Poland, a fascinating four-day seminar at Beit Theresienstadt in collaboration with the Moreshet Research Center, Givat Haviva. The series of online lectures held every Tuesday is another activity that has been very successful. We started this when we were looking for alternatives to activities for the Holocaust Remembrance Day, and because we wanted to stay in touch with our visitors and followers. We soon discovered the benefits—we are now able to reach a large audience that would not have participated if the lectures had been held physically in Givat Haim Ihud: the elderly, who for health reasons find it hard to visit, the busy young people who can join in for just a short time from home, friends from abroad, and of course, lecturers from abroad.

Another thing we are working on during this period is a new exhibition that will replace the Whole Fragments 2 exhibition. The exhibition will deal with everyday life in the ghetto as portrayed in art.

We are undoubtedly facing complex challenges, uncertainty in particular, which makes it difficult to plan and prepare for the future. But there also something good in this—it refreshes our way of thinking and opens us up to new directions. I hope that we will soon emerge from the difficult crisis in both the small circle of Beit Theresienstadt, the larger circle of the state of Israel and the entire world.

Happy New Year, good health and good tidings.

Yours,  
Tami Kinberg  
Director of Beit Theresienstadt



## In memory of Eli Lawental Zehava Lawental

Beloved Eli of mine, of ours,

I'm supposed to write about you and sum up your life, but I have no idea how to. Anyone who knew you, understands. And whoever does not— it is impossible to cover everything and tell all about what you managed to accomplish in your 67 years on Earth. You were a man of knowledge and action, a professor and a social worker, a manager and a volunteer who led a number of organizations, a person who liked people, conversation and football. All of your many pursuits flowed and were shaded by the values that guided you: a desire to live and create, even in difficult conditions, your respect for every person whoever they may be, your feelings of responsibility to act, improve, contribute and be of benefit in every field that you touched.



You were involved with Beit Theresienstadt since it was founded. Your father and grandfather were among the ghetto survivors. From a board member, you became the chairman of the younger generation, and in 1995 you were elected chairman of the association. The core values that guided you in all of your professional choices are those that were also behind your work (along with the dedicated staff) of 25 years in Beit Theresienstadt and in commemorating the heritage it represents. About a year ago, you were forced to retire from your activity because your health condition would not allow it, but mainly because we moved to San Diego in the United States, where we waited for a heart transplant for you; for new hope. You saw the break in your activity as a temporary absence. You were so hoping to get back home fast, to a healthier and more active life. It didn't happen.

Your life's journey represented who you were: a groundbreaker, a brave man, a man with dreams that he strived to fulfill. You fought so many wars, always over matters of principle, always patiently and always from your heart. You followed the things you believed in. You believed in justice and you were optimistic. You believed in processes. It was this spirit that you brought with you to Beit Theresienstadt, and that was your unique contribution.

Your fragile health was so deceptive. You were an anchor, a wall to lean on, a solid rock. Your broad wings sheltered so many people. You left ripples in so many hearts. You were such a special person. You knew how to love. You were loved, and so you will be, forever.

And to all the friends of Beit Theresienstadt,

This year is a difficult one for us all. I believe that there is a broad consensus and that we all want it to end and take with it all the trouble it has brought upon us. We are all mourning for someone or something that we have lost, be it someone dear to us, a source of livelihood, or the ability to move and breathe freely or to embrace our children and grandchildren. We are all going through a mourning process and are looking for light and hope.

**One year and its curses is ending, and another year and its blessings is beginning.  
I wish us all a better year, because we deserve it!**

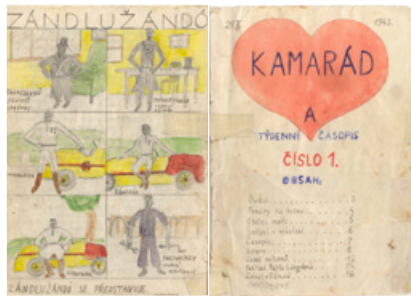
## Beit Theresienstadt News

With the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, we were forced to close the museum doors due to Ministry of Health guidelines. All planned activities and projects were canceled.

The new reality imposed on us all led us to think of and develop new ways and alternative activities in order to continue our important work.

**Holocaust Remembrance Day:**

This year, the Holocaust Remembrance Day was marked in a unique way, and without our traditional ceremony at the hall



of Beit Vienna.

We held a lecture on Zoom, "They Called Him a Friend," on the story of the youth magazine Kamarád, written between 1943 and 1944 by a group of youths aged 12 to 14

from the children's Heim (home) in the Theresienstadt ghetto. The periodical is a unique document about the children's lives, daily routine, joys and fears.

Afterward, a special panel was held on the film "Liga Terezin, the Game was our Life," with the participation of Prof. Moshe Zimmermann (from the Hebrew University History Department, director of the Koebner Center for German History), Mike



Schwartz (co-director and screenwriter of the film) and Oded Breda (second generation, one of the creators of the film Liga Terezin and the former director of Beit Theresienstadt).

At the same time, we added a page on the Beit Theresienstadt website for people to light a memorial candle for the souls of Holocaust victims. ■

## Commemorating 75 Years Since the Liberation of the Theresienstadt Ghetto

To mark the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Theresienstadt ghetto, we held a fascinating and moving get together with survivors from the ghetto, who were there on the day of the liberation, Gerda Steinfeld and Ruth Meissner. ■

## A Series of Online Lectures

In May, we began a series of online lectures on Zoom platform.

Once a week, on Tuesdays, we hold lectures on a variety of topics related to the story of the Theresienstadt ghetto and of the Jewish communities sent there.

Some of the lectures deal with historical perspectives on the story of the ghetto and others with the personal stories of ghetto survivors. The lectures are intended for the general public in Israel and abroad, and in recent months hundreds of people from Israel and abroad have participated in them.

Among the lectures that were given: "Holocaust, Comics and What's Between Them", "And Show Respect For the Elderly—A Social Challenge," "The Good Can Never Be Taken for Granted" (the story of the late Ruth Bondy), "Being a Woman in the Theresienstadt Ghetto," the memoirs of Eva Erben, "Memories in a Plastic Basket"—the story of Tamar Hermmann (Zuzana Taus), the package factory of Heinz Prosnitz, and more.



Ruth Bondy

All lectures are available for viewing on the Beit Theresienstadt website: [www.bterezin.org.il](http://www.bterezin.org.il)

These days, we are starting a series of lectures in English in collaboration with various organizations from abroad. Among the lecturers from abroad whom we hosted was the Dutch author and historian

Karel Margry, who spoke about the two propaganda films that were filmed in the Theresienstadt ghetto, and Ms. Zuzana Pavlovská, Head of Education Department, Jewish Museum in Prague, who spoke about the JMP. ■





## The Miracle of the Loaves – Heinz Prossnitz' Package Aid

When it became clear in May 1945 that Heinz Prossnitz had not survived, Erika Wolf (Akka) and Edith Březina (Naomi), the last ones remaining in Prague after all his friends were exiled to the Theresienstadt ghetto and extermination camps, wrote a brief overview instead of an obituary:

4,400 kg of groceries straight to Theresienstadt;  
830 kg of groceries to Birkenau and the Lodz ghetto;  
600 kg of clothing and groceries for Sachsenhausen and Hamburg;  
with no public funds,  
with no public support,  
of his own initiative,  
at his own risk,  
under the economic supervision  
and restrictions on Jews

under the Gestapo's Sword of Damocles.

Behind what looks like a huge grocery list lies the amazing and unusual story of Heinz Prossnitz, a Jewish boy born in Prague in 1926, who, under the noses of the Nazis, set up a relief effort to deliver food and money to Jews imprisoned in the ghettos and camps.

Like many other young Jews after Czechoslovakia was invaded, Heinz Prossnitz joined the Maccabi Hatzair Zionist youth movement and formed a group with eight to ten youths his age called Havlaga (Restraint).

The instructor of the Havlaga group was Fredy Hirsch, a refugee born in 1916 from the city Aachen in Germany, a physical education teacher by profession, tall with an athletic build, self-confident, and dedicated to the new Jewish ideal that was about to grow in the Land of Israel.

The life of the group changed fundamentally in the summer of 1941, when the authorities prevented immigration, the activities of the Zionist youth movements were banned, and the school was closed. From then on, the youths could only meet in small groups in private apartments. When the transports to the east began in October 1941 (the first were to Lodz), six Zionist youth movement leaders met with Jakob Edelstein, the deputy head of the Jewish community, and they decided to establish a transport assistance service, intended to look after the children and youths while their parents were occupied with preparing for the transport, to help pack the luggage and bags and to take the luggage to the central point in the former commercial fair area.

Fredy Hirsch was elected to head the center. It was more than clear that the members of the former Havlaga group were fully committed to giving this service. The group established a joint fund. The members of the group who were working—in factories, workshops and gardening—handed over part of their wages, and those who received pocket money from their parents gave most of it to the fund.



Heinz Prossnitz

the beginning of the relief effort that was his life's work.

Since the people leaving were forbidden to take money with them, the young people asked, wherever it seemed appropriate to them, for donations to their aid fund, instead of the money falling into the hands of the Germans. Heinz took it on himself to manage the fund. This was

A short time later, the first postcards from deportees began to arrive from Lodz, suggesting there was a shortage. For the first 20 months, only cash checks were allowed to be sent to the Lodz ghetto. From the joint fund, sums of 20, 25 and 30 Deutsche Marks were regularly sent to friends in Lodz.

In November 1941, a ghetto was established in the garrison town of Theresienstadt for the Jews of the Protectorate (Bohemia and Moravia).

During 1942, gradually most of the members of Maccabi Hatzair and other youth movements active in the transport assistance service, including Fredy Hirsch, were sent, usually with their parents, to the Theresienstadt ghetto. In a letter he smuggled to Fredy Hirsch and his friends in Theresienstadt, Heinz wrote: "I've just learned that packages can only be sent to you in exchange for stamps that you send me. Divide them among you. You can send me 30 stamps a month. Start immediately!" The stamps in question were permit stamps to receive a package that the ghetto prisoners could receive in turn once every few months, provided they still had someone outside the ghetto to whom they could send them.

Heinz found a supplier for every need. An entire network was set up: Friends, relatives or Aryan confidantes secretly brought Heinz groceries, money or food stamps so that he could send the packages in his own name. The recipients of the packages from Heinz and his parents included all the members of the Zionist leadership, leaders of Maccabi Hatzair, and all of Heinz's friends and their families, of course, altogether about 100 people. The food packages strengthened them both physically and mentally, brought them hours of happiness and gave them hope.

Heinz Prossnitz also served as a message station. Greetings and regards were relayed through him. Signs of life from the Lodz or Birkenau ghettos were passed on to relatives in the Theresienstadt ghetto; news of Theresienstadt prisoners was passed on to friends and the Aryans who helped them.

In addition, after the Birkenau family camp was established, Heinz also started to send parcels to his friends who had

been sent there. According to a survey he prepared on June 2, 1944, when he assumed that he would be transferred soon to Theresienstadt, he sent 1,492 kilograms of bread and 293 food packages worth 56,000 Czech crowns to Birkenau. It is difficult to estimate the present value of that sum, but the miracle of the loaves can be easily estimated: more strength, days of happiness, a glimmer of hope, and faith in humankind in the shadow of the crematoria.

On October 27, 1944, when the Prossnitz family received a transport summons, as part of a group of 18 people, workers from the Prague Jewish Council and their families, everyone took for granted that the train would take them to the Theresienstadt ghetto. Heinz gave Naomi the cash box, keys and addresses, and noted who to write to in German, and who to in Czech.

The Prossnitz family was indeed sent to Theresienstadt, only to join a transport of 1,000 deportees who were about to leave for Auschwitz on October 28, 1944. As usual, on the station platform in Birkenau, a selection was made and the young and strong were sent to work in Germany. However, the group of 18 from Prague, including Heinz and his parents and members of the ghetto leadership, who arrived in a special



The JNF pin on a badge of The Maccabi Hatzair youth movement. Belonged to Heinz Prossnitz.

car on the same train, all went straight to the gas chambers, without going through selection.

After Heinz left, Naomi and Akka continued his work as instructed. The postcards and words of thanks continued to arrive addressed to him. An envelope was found in Heinz's estate that read: "Open this if I ever disappear forever." The envelope contained the emblem of the Prague Maccabi Hatzair; a postcard of a ship on the shore of the Land of Israel and a portrait of Herzl, along with his words: If you will, this is not a legend; and a note that Heinz wrote: "Even if I arrive in the Land of Israel dead, I do not want to rot on Czech soil." His ashes fertilized Polish soil.

### Does Heinz Prossnitz' story have a moral?

The first conclusion is that in the realm of absolute evil, love of humankind is also defeated. But one can also draw the opposite conclusion—one must not give up, even in the face of deadly priority. A person should never say to him or herself: What can I, a small, helpless screw, do?

Yes, Heinz Prossnitz was defeated, most of the recipients of his parcels did not survive, but the loaves of bread, as in Magritte's paintings, hover over the merciless Auschwitz sky as a symbol of empathy with the suffering of others.

Based on the essay "The Miracle of the Loaves—Heinz Prossnitz' Package Aid" by Ruth Bondy, in *Trapped: Essays on the History of the Czech Jews, 1939-1943* ■

### Dear Prossnitz family,

I am taking this first opportunity to give you a sign of life.

As you know, I'm working with Gonda (Egon Redlich, the Head of the Youth Welfare Department) in taking care of the youth. There are almost 4,000 children and youths here.

We have six large buildings with countless barracks. Life is pretty organized, with gymnastics and sports, and everything they had before. I often spend time with Edelstein and Zucker (the elder of the Jews and his deputy).

I wonder when you will come...

To Heinz, I am very grateful for his exemplary behavior. Inge sends him her regards.

Please go to Erich Steinhardt and tell him that his aunt will be working for me, and that his uncle is in good health and condition.

He can now send them packages.

Warm greetings to all our friends,

Yours,  
Fredy Hirsch





## Corona and Roots

### David Magen

This year, on the eve of Holocaust Remembrance Day, I chose to watch a documentary called "50 Children: The Rescue Mission of Mr. and Mrs. Kraus". The film tells the story of a Jewish couple from Philadelphia who in 1938 decided to save 50 children from Vienna. I won't go into the story of the film here, but I do recommend seeing it.

I watched the film with great curiosity, since both my parents were refugees from Vienna in 1938 (I was born with the surname Fleischner, and I am an Oppenheimer on my mother's side). My mother left Vienna on the Kindertransport and my father managed to leave with a visa to Shanghai, and the film mentioned both these historical events. The visuals were all probably collected from archive footage.

Museum, and happened to take a photograph of his glasses, which are on display. In the case, the stamp "Oppenheimer" can be clearly seen. We knew that our clientele included well-known personalities such as Emperor Franz Joseph, composer Gustav Mahler and many artists, but now we could add Freud to the distinguished list.

Due to the coronavirus crisis, for the past few months I've been taking advantage of the unexpected free time to delve deeper into my family history and to continue the research that my father started when he retired. At the time, he took it very seriously and visited Czechoslovakia back in the communist era to research our family history. He even hired someone



My grandfather, Erich Oppenheimer, was an optician and had two shops, one located on the facade of the Bristol Hotel, opposite the National Opera. Naturally, the Kraus couple (from the film) chose to stay at that hotel when they arrived in Vienna to choose the children and arrange their departure. Suddenly, I noticed our shop in the film, with Nazi flags flying in front. I stopped the film, took a picture of the frame and shared my discovery with my family. We have a photo of the shop from the 1920s and there are others from after the war, but until now, we had no documentation from Hitler's times.



Sigmund Freud's glasses

I contacted the film producer and asked if the store appeared in any other raw footage from the film. He responded immediately and agreed to look. Although he didn't find any more material, he said that during one of his visits to Vienna when they were making the film, he visited the Sigmund Freud

who searched and rummaged for information in the archives there. I started with a magnificent and detailed family tree, but one that hadn't been touched by anyone in decades. I took it upon myself to update the one we had, and also to try to look deeper into anything that I could. I knew some of the names on the original tree, but I made countless new discoveries, thanks to the internet that connected me to people, both from my generation and to those younger than me. People can be located quite easily, if you put in a little effort, and I found relatives some of whom had perished, and others who were now living all over the world. I am also using the free time that was forced on me (and on us all) to put our photographs in order, a project that had been waiting for a rainy day that I had no more excuses for postponing. Among the photos, I found documentation from the family roots trip to Austria and the Czech Republic that I had the privileged of going on with my parents and siblings in 1993.

Letters are a way of connecting people and are a link to the past. Another relative who I found is Helen Waldstein Wilkes,



author of a book, **Letters from the Lost** which is available online. I read it from beginning to end, unable to stop. Helen remembers that when she was a young girl in Canada, her parents would receive letters from abroad. Whenever such a letter arrived, she would be sent to play and her parents would close themselves in a room to read the letter. Helen didn't know her grandparents or aunts and uncles, but there was a photo album on the table in the living room with photos of their relatives who had stayed behind in Europe. The letters were kept in a box that with time had found its way to her, but she hadn't dared to open it. Only at the age of 60, when her parents were no longer alive, did she muster up the courage to open the box and read the letters. The letters began in April 1939, the day after her parents left Czechoslovakia, and ended with a letter written after the war describing what the family had been through in the Theresienstadt ghetto. This fascinating documentation is worthy of being translated into Hebrew, and I hope that we can do it at Beit Theresienstadt and use it for educational and other purposes.

I shared this book with many friends, including a work colleague, who was very impressed by it and recommended that I contact an artist by the name of Bunny Burson, who turned her parents' letters into abstract works, some of which are on display at the Israel Museum, the US Library of Congress and elsewhere. When we talked, I mentioned that there were 45 letters in my mother's home that my grandfather wrote when he was imprisoned on the Isle of Man in 1940-41, after



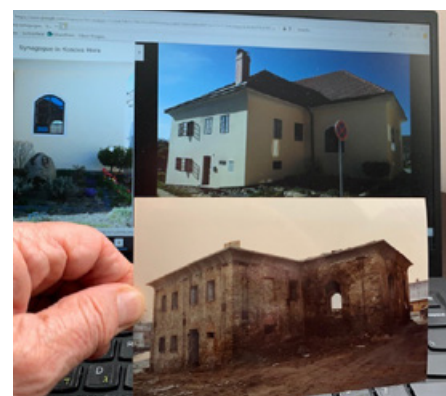
Magen's family in Prague under a picture of Rabbi Sicher. On the left - David

fleeing Austria. During World War II, part of the island served as a camp for enemy aliens that had arrived in the UK from Germany and Austria. Most of them were Jews who had fled the Nazis. My grandfather stayed in a camp for about a year, imprisoned behind a barbed wire fence. Bunny encouraged me to translate the letters while my mother was still alive and could help to decipher them.

One thing led to another, and during my search, I found Hans Gál, a very well-known musician in Vienna and later in the

UK. He was born in 1890 and managed to flee to the UK in 1938 immediately after the Anschluss. There he taught at the University of Edinburgh and had a senior position, but was also interned by the British on the Isle of Man as an

enemy alien. He was in the same camp on the Isle of Man at the time my grandfather was there—I'm curious to see if he mentioned this in his letters, because they were both from the same branch of the family. Erich (the optician) was interested in culture and music, and Hans, from his picture, wore glasses, which he most likely bought from our shop.



Kosova Hora (Amschelberg) synagogue

The Fleischner family forms an entire branch on our family tree. In my opinion, and I say this with great caution, there is no one in the world today who bears the name Fleischner and who is related to my family. The women of the family changed their names after getting married. I was able to track down some of the descendants, and it turns out that there are a few relatives in Argentina and Brazil who fled in 1938-9 from Austria and Czechoslovakia. Coincidentally, I found three families from Givat Haim who are related to me—the Jerusalem family (Lily, who married and became Klein), the Magal family, who changed their name from Oberlander, and also Eliyahu Livneh (Liebstein) who lived on the kibbutz before the split between Ichud and Meuchad. Eliyahu is the nephew of Ludwig Liebstein, whose wife Charlotte was my great-grandfather's niece. Lotté's brother is Gustav Sicher, who was the Chief Rabbi of Prague from 1945 to 1947. Among the photos I found from our family trip in 1993, there is a picture in which I, my parents and siblings are standing below a painting of Rabbi Sicher in the Rabbinate office in Prague. Another photo is from a visit to Kosova Hora (Amschelberg), where the Adler family lived, and where I took a photo of the abandoned and crumbling synagogue, although inside we noticed scaffolding and signs of building work. I did a quick search online and found a photo from 2018 showing the renovated building. I am very curious to know what purpose it serves today.

A new link I discovered in Canada: the Popper, Abeles, Levitt and Brock families, who originated from Czechoslovakia and have been in Canada for over 80 years. They made it there thanks to Karl Abeles (Hana Livneh was an Abeles before she married). In 1938, through his connections at Canadian Pacific

\* to be Continued on page 15

## The Tragic Price of Family Cohesion in October 1944 Transports from Theresienstadt to Auschwitz

Dr. Margalit Shlain

Throughout the existence of the Theresienstadt ghetto (1945-1941), which was actually a concentration camp and transit camp en route to the death camps, the Germans made enormous efforts to deceive the Jews imprisoned in it; this, in order to prevent and reduce Jewish resistance, blunt Jewish fears and disguise the objective of the deportations. On the other hand, due to family loyalty, young Jews in the ghetto were faced with a difficult decision when their parents were summoned to be deported "to the east" (from January 1942 to October 1944): Was it their duty to volunteer to join their parents on the transport? Nava Shan (Vlasta Schönová-Wava) wrote about this:

"In September 1943, my parents were summoned to be transported to the east. Anscha, Marianka and I, the girls, did not receive a summons. We discussed it among ourselves: we would not let our parents go alone. One of us would go with them. Who? Not Marianka, as she was the youngest. The choice was between me and Anscha. We argued, each giving our own reasons. We were all ashamed to be the one to stay. Finally, we decided that Anscha would go. I accompanied Mom and Dad to the railway car."

Both her parents and sister perished in Auschwitz.

Already in October 1944, the Germans managed to deceive the Jews imprisoned in Theresienstadt that their fate has not yet been decided and that they could hope to survive. With great cynicism, the Germans took advantage of Jewish family cohesion, which caused women and girls to volunteer to join their loved ones on transports leaving Theresienstadt or to follow them to a "new labor camp," as it were. The cost of so doing was extremely tragic.

Due to the changes on the front line and the national uprising in Slovakia, which broke out on August 29, 1944, the makeup of the prisoner population in Theresienstadt caused the Germans concern, as there were young and healthy Jewish officers of various nationalities who had the potential to lead a revolt. As such, the German command gave "special instructions" and ordered a certain number of them, from a list of names, to be added to the first transports, along with other young people fit for work (and combat) who were transported from the ghetto at the end of September.

On September 24, the German command ordered the ghetto's Jewish administration to release the following statement:

"As a larger number of Theresienstadt inmates need to be made available for the general war effort [in the arms industry in Upper Silesia, such as the Riese camp] and since an inspection

performed yesterday found that due to lack of space, this is not possible in Theresienstadt, it is necessary to post 5,000 suitable workers must be deployed externally for this purpose, of whom 2,500 will depart on Tuesday morning, and another 2,500 early on Wednesday. Engineer Otto Zucker, the deputy Jewish elder in Theresienstadt is charged with building the new labor camp."

Zucker's appointment was intended to increase confidence that this was indeed a labor camp.

The first transport of 2,499 men left on September 28, and the next day, on the 29th, a second transport left for the "labor camp" with an additional 1,500 men. After the second transport departed, the German command made a deliberately deceptive announcement that a special permit had been obtained for 500 women, who of their own free will wished to accompany their husbands, to join the third transport. They were added to the 1,000 men who were meant to join the "labor camp," but for organizational reasons had not left on the second transport.

**The women volunteered en masse, along with their children,** but the quota that the Germans allotted could not accommodate them all. It was heartbreaking to watch the SS chase away the women and their children who had pushed onto the train. Edith Ornstein, who survived, described in her testimony how great the deception was: "People crying because they are not allowed to travel to their death." The SS guards "calmed" them down: "Patience, gradually everyone will join them. For the Jews, there are railway cars, even in the worst conditions of war, but not so many at once. You will all have the opportunity," the SS men grinned, "you will all join your husbands." Women who were not found a spot on that transport, left on the next, three days later.

Among the volunteers who left on the third transport, on October 1, was also Bedřiska "Fritzi" Zucker, the wife of the "new camp" manager. The SS commandant, Karl Rahm demanded from the Jewish elder Benjamin Murelstein, a special report containing her personal details, "That way, as soon as she arrives, she can join her husband." In a similar vein, Rahm and Ernst Röhm, Eichmann's representative who came to supervise the transports, spoke with her, too, and she left with the transport almost in high spirits, in a special railway car assigned to important people, "so that they wouldn't travel in cramped conditions." In fact, the German



Ilse Weber



command had marked all the passengers in the special car to be sent to be killed in the gas chambers as soon as they arrived in Auschwitz.

Ludwig Steinberg was among the 2,499 men who left for Auschwitz on the first transport, on September 28. His wife, Ida Steinberg, volunteered to follow him and was placed on the fourth transport that left on October 4, along with her six-year-old son, Amos. Their story is published in this issue, written by Leah Shamir Shinan and Prof. Avigdor Shinan.

Ilse Weber (1903–1944), a poet and children's author. She was born in Witkowitz, Czechoslovakia, and she, too, volunteered for this transport. In 1939, she managed to save her eight-year-old son Hanuš by sending him to Sweden. In 1942, at the age of thirty-nine, she was sent to Theresienstadt with her husband Willi and their younger son Tommy, who was five years old. For two years, Ilse worked in the ghetto as a nurse in the camp's children's infirmary, and on October 4, 1944, she volunteered to go on a transport with her young son in order to join her husband, who had left before her. Ilse and Tommy perished in Auschwitz. Willi survived the war.

After each transport, the prisoners in Theresienstadt hoped it would be the last, but the secretariat of the Transport Committee, announced again and again the date of the next transport and the number of people to be on it, with instructions regarding luggage and requests to volunteer. The German command cynically continued to deceive the Jews and threatened to send all those who tried to evade deportation to a concentration camp, even though from the beginning, the real destination of all the transports was the Auschwitz concentration and extermination camp.

Zuzana Tauss, who later became Tamar Herrmann, was a seventeen-year-old from Brno. She volunteered with her twenty-three-year-old sister Lisbeth (Lisa) to leave with their parents, who had been summoned for transport. At the last minute, Zuzana was removed from the transport, as she was an essential worker in agriculture. In the early hours of the morning of October 16, her parents and sister arrived for the transport, as Zuzana described in her diary in the ghetto: "At 04.00, they boarded the car. I will never forget how I said goodbye to my parents, how my father blessed me when he lay his hands on my head. To this day, I can see them disappearing behind the arches of the lights into the shouting and commotion. I felt terrible."

Her parents perished in the gas chambers immediately after their arrival in Auschwitz, while her sister Lisa died in Bergen-Belsen, a day before the liberation. (A detailed article about Tamar Herrmann was published in Dapei Keshet Issue No. 87, September 2019).

Twenty-three-year-old Mathilde (Tilly) Frankl, who was sent



The wedding photo of Victor and Tilly Frankl in 1941.

from Vienna to Theresienstadt in 1942 with her husband, psychiatrist Viktor Frankl, was protected from deportation due to her work, which was vital to the German war effort (splitting glimmer rocks, which were used to insulate electrical appliances and for the auxiliary aircraft industry). On October 19, her husband was summoned for transport. This is what Victor Frankl, who survived, wrote in his memoirs: "I knew Tilly well. I was sure she would do anything to come with me. As such, I stressed that she was not to join my group. Joining it was dangerous, and could also have been interpreted as harmful to the war effort. Despite my arguments and without my knowledge, Tilly did volunteer and was given permission to join a group that would move to Auschwitz."

Tilly died in Bergen-Belsen after the liberation.

Even after three years in the Theresienstadt ghetto, during which the Germans repeatedly violated their promises of "refuge" in Theresienstadt, and after they deported tens of thousands of Jews "to the east," they still managed to mislead most of the remaining prisoners regarding the destination of the transports. To such a degree that many women and girls volunteered to leave on the October 1944 transports with or following their loved ones. Volunteering that cost them their lives and led to their premature deaths. ■

## About Our Brother Amos Steinberg, May God Avenge His Blood, a Boy With "Such a Sabra Name"

Leah Shamir Shinan and Prof. Avigdor Shinan

On July 21, 2020, shortly after midnight, I finished my work on the computer. As usual, before turning it off, I scrolled through the news flashes and saw an article that began with: "A finding in the shoe of a child murdered in Auschwitz."

There was something exciting and eye-catching about the title, and so I continued reading. According to a statement from the Holocaust museum in Auschwitz, the shoe was being displayed in one of the museum's permanent exhibitions, and during conservation work, the boy's first name and surname were discovered, as well as details about the transport he arrived on and his registration number. The museum also traced the date of his birth, according to their sources.



Amos Steinberg at the age of three

a phone book, I would check to see if it listed a person by the name of Amos Steinberg. I'd always hoped that he might have survived.

And here, for our family, one identified shoe out of millions of shoes displayed at the museum in Auschwitz was exposing and symbolizing the end of the short and tragic journey through life of Amos and his mother. At the same time, however, it was shining a light on our family's rise from the ashes and resurrection, with my father marriage to our mother. My father survived Auschwitz and Kaufering 3, and our mother Hana (Hanka) Shinan (Fanta/Fischer) was the only one of her entire extended family to survive the Theresienstadt camp.

We, my brother who is two years older than me and I, were born after the war, in the Vinohrady

(vineyard) neighborhood in Prague, and we all immigrated to Israel in 1949. We grew up in an atypical Holocaust survivors' home, one full of love, optimism, a zest for life, songs, humor and stories in Czech; and of course, typical Czech dishes, which are now loved by the grandchildren, too. All of these were entwined in a home that's entire everyday and spiritual essence was based on Jewish and Zionist culture.



From left to right: Ida and Ludwig Steinberg with Ida's sister

his parents, Ida and Ludwig Steinberg, were accurate and so familiar to me. After all, he was my father Yehuda Shinan's son, (Ludwig Steinberg), from his first marriage to Ida (nee Stein).

I then read the responses to the article. Most of the writers expressed great excitement over the identification, as well as sorrow over the little six-year-old boy who had perished with his mother in the extermination camp. Some wondered about the boy's name, which was so "sabra." How did that Hebrew boy, Amos Steinberg, land up in Auschwitz in 1944? Visitors to Theresienstadt are also surprised when they see his name among the European names on the long list of children who lived in the ghetto and perished. The answer lies in what will be described below, in our family's story, origins and history. For years, I traveled all over the world, and wherever I found

Our father originally came from the small village Veretzky (Nyzhni Vorota) in the Carpathian Ruthenia region, which was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He moved to Prague in the 1930s after serving in the Czech army and he lived there for a few years. Our mother Hana (Hanka) came from a wealthy family that lived in Prague for many years. As children of Holocaust survivors from the Czech Republic, news regarding the Holocaust, and especially regarding the Theresienstadt ghetto, usually caught our eye. The ghetto is closely identified with Czech Jewry: Our mother was one of the thousands of Jews from Prague who lived in the ghetto during the Holocaust (1942-1945) and luckily, was not sent "east." Our father was sent to Theresienstadt on August 19, 1942, together with his wife Ida/Idel (nee Stein, born in Munkács) and Amos, their six-year-old son (born on June 26, 1938). About two years later, in October 1944, they were sent to Auschwitz. Ida and Amos were sent directly to the gas chambers and murdered there, while our father was sent from there to Dachau and then on to Kaufering 3.

We did not discover anything new in the story about Amos and the shoe, no "terrible secret that had been hidden from us," as is commonly reported in most descriptions of Holocaust survivor parents and the second generation. From the day we could





Ludwig, Ida and Amos Steinberg

think, we grew up knowing about our parents' experiences, and our every question received a direct and frank answer. We heard stories about their childhoods, my father's in the ultra-Orthodox home in what is now Nyzhni Vorota, his service in the Czechoslovakian army, his studies at the Hebrew teachers' seminary in Mukachevo, and about his move to Prague. He told us that he was fluent in Hebrew and taught Jewish culture at several schools in the big city (hence the "sabra" name of his

oldest son), and about his position as cantor in the Vinohrady synagogue of Vinohradi, under the leadership of the well-known Rabbi and Dr. Sicher. Back then, my father prepared the community's children for their bar mitzvahs, including our mother's brother, and that's how he came to meet her even before the war. A photo of Amos and his mother was always on full view in our home and we even used to visit Ida's cousin Dr. Eliezer Friedman and his family in Afula.

After immigrating to Israel in May 1949, we lived in Haifa (first in Wadi Roshmia and then in Wadi Nisnas) before moving to Kfar Ata (now: Kiryat Ata). Immediately upon making aliya, our father became a teacher and school principal in the transit camps and communities in the periphery. He was an avid Zionist, very dedicated to his work, and loved and admired by the students and teachers with whom he worked. He also continued to work as a cantor and choral conductor, and to volunteer in educational and social projects. He passed away in 1985. Our mother, who was thirteen years his junior, worked as a bookkeeper and also did community and volunteer work. She passed away in 2014. May their memory be a blessing.

We were both blessed with wonderful parents who encouraged us to develop and grow, and we are grateful to them. Avigdor fulfilled our father's life dream, which was cut short by that damned war, and he became a professor of literature at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Leah is a city planner and is involved, among other things, in the preservation of heritage sites.

To a degree, finding the shoe while doing conservation work marks the closing of another circle. ■



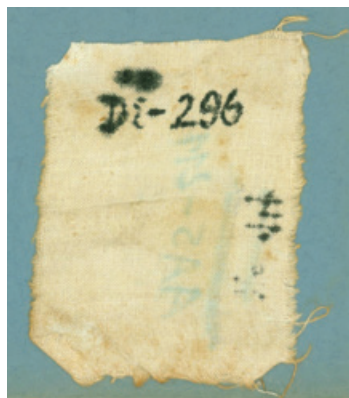
Prof. Avigdor Shinan



Leah Shamir Shinan

## Following the traces of the Shek family Dr. Tereza Maizels

Last August, Rachel (Leli) Shek transferred dozens of drawings by her mother, Aliza Ehrmann Shek, to the Beit Theresienstadt archives, after they underwent preservation treatment. Some of the works were dated by Aliza, but many



A piece of cloth with personal ID and transport numbers of Ze'ev Shek

were undated. To make it easier to identify which works were painted in the Theresienstadt ghetto and to distinguish them from later works, Leli arranged them by their period, according to the type of paper, style and technique used.

She also gave me a document, which has also been treated, that was part of an album from the Shek family's private album collection that describe the ghetto's history and that was donated to Beit Theresienstadt in March 2019.

This album is a chronicle and includes various items belonging to the Shek family, including Ze'ev Shek's transport tickets, a small scrap of white fabric noting the code of Ze'ev's transport and Ze'ev's personal ID number, entrance tickets to cultural events and activities in the ghetto, handmade greeting cards and gifts, coupons and various permission slips and stubs relating to daily life in the ghetto, including food stamps, correspondence with Heinz Prossnitz before he was sent from Prague to Auschwitz, official correspondence between

members of the Youth Care Department, such as Egon Redlich and Fredy Hirsch.

The album also includes items from the post-liberation period, including one of the most famous photographs of the documentation operation conducted between 1945 and 1946 managed by Ze'ev Shek. The back of the photograph has the following inscription: "The historical discussion regarding the documentation work in Prague. Most of the people are members of HeHalutz youth movement."

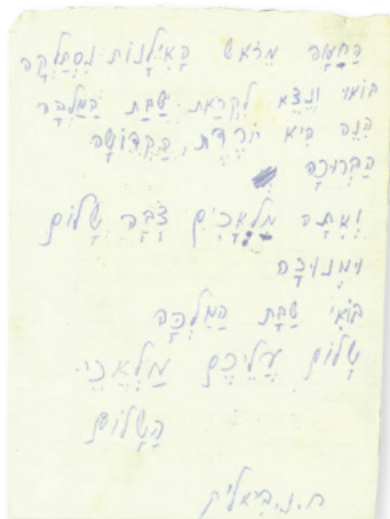
The photo shows the desk in Ze'ev Shek's office, around which are sitting: Jiri Lauscher, Ruth Bondy, Robert Weinberger (Vinci), Harry Tarsi, Edith Sacksel and Berta Gerzon.

The last pages of the album also contain a personal letter from Max Munk, a prisoner in Buchenwald, in which he describes Ze'ev's father's personality and his experiences in Buchenwald.

Albums and pamphlets of this kind are extremely important for understanding the lives of the prisoners, both personal and public, and for understanding the complex administrative running of the Theresienstadt



Greeting card from Heim L414, April 20, 1944



Hebrew lessons

ghetto. ■

## A search for a boy from the Theresienstadt ghetto

Inge Auerbacher

While on my last trip to Auschwitz with a teacher group I came across a suitcase of Pavel Kohn in one of the buildings that housed artifacts. I thought right away he must have been in Theresienstadt. His birth year touched me so because we were the same age in Theresienstadt. I looked him up and some records show that he was from Prague. I am looking for more data on him. It would be so fantastic to be in contact with some of his family where ever they may live in this world.

If you have any information about Pavel Kohn, born in Prague 1935, please contact Ms. Inge Auerbacher at: [ingeauerbacher@yahoo.com](mailto:ingeauerbacher@yahoo.com)





## Corona and Roots / David Magen (continued from page 9)

Railway, Abeles obtained 39 permits to leave Czechoslovakia, on condition that the immigrants work in agriculture. Families including Helen Waldstein's family, received the permits, came to Canada and began working their farms. Two years ago, there was a get-together of hundreds of relatives at Temple Anshei Shalom in Hamilton, Ontario, whose rabbi I know well from my work. Much to my frustration, at the time I didn't know about the families and I missed the special gathering. These and other families stay in touch, especially now during the coronavirus times, and it turns out that 49 of our relatives who all came originally from Tachau, most of whom are now in the U.S. Switzerland, England, Canada France and Argentina, have a worldwide weekly zoom call.

Among the family's descendants I also found the scientist Felix Bloch, who was the 1952 Nobel physics laureate and took part in the Manhattan Project. I'm still looking for his descendants and a list of other very interesting people.

I will end with something sad. I knew that my grandparents were in Theresienstadt, I knew that they perished in Auschwitz, and that my father's cousin, Bobby Fleischner and his wife Lily lived with and shared a room with Peter Erben (z"l) during their time in the Ghetto. Peter was actually the last to see Bobby alive. I knew that a large part of our family had died in the Holocaust, but I did not know the details. I took it upon myself,

out of respect for these people, that they wouldn't remain just anonymous; I research and document, at least regarding the Theresienstadt ghetto, which relatives were sent there, when and for how long, and anything else that I could find out about them. Much of the information was collected with the help of Beit Theresienstadt. I started with 3 names and as of today I have reached 169, among them people who were in transit for a day or two, and others who spent two or more years in the ghetto—and sometimes, I actually just sit here and cry.

It has become a fascinating hobby that has no end. I hope that here and there, I'll inspire young people who will ask me questions, draw information from me, and continue after me. ■



Since the preparation of this article, David's mother, Dorothy Fleming, passed away in good health, at her home in England. R.I.P

Michael Gruenbaum, author of the book "Somewhere there is still a sun" turned 90 last month. On the occasion of his birthday, his family made him a poster showing all the translations of his book. Michael wrote to us:

My family made this poster for me for my recent 90th birthday; additional translations are expected after the demise of the coronavirus. I thought you might find the poster of interest and possibly mention it in your newsletter to show that the name Terezin or Theresienstadt is spreading around the world.

We congratulate Michael on his birthday and wish him success in further translations of his book into various languages, including Hebrew. ■



## Dear friends and colleagues,

We were very moved by the support and efforts of you all to save Beit Theresienstadt—the first generation, the younger generations, and many others for whom Beit Theresienstadt and its activities to preserve the memory of the Holocaust are dear to their hearts. We do not take this for granted!

Together, we will succeed in continuing in the spirit of the founders who wanted to create a place in which life would continue and that would express the belief of those who perished and of the ghetto survivors, that “The strength of Israel will not lie”— 1 Samuel 15:29

**Thank you!**

We are continuing our fundraising campaign, aiming to overcome the economic crisis, sustain current activities and produce alternative and attractive activities adapted to the special situation in which we find ourselves.

Anyone who still wishes to, can help by making a modest donation of NIS 200 (any other amount is also welcome).

**You can donate in the following ways:**

1. Our Members from the USA may use PEF that transfers money to Beit Theresienstadt without commission and tax free.  
NEW!!! Payment to P.E.F. by Credit card: <https://www.causematch.com/en/bterezin-2/>  
or by check made out to P.E.F. with explicit order to transfer the money to Beit Theresiesntadt – its number at the P.E.F. is 2210  
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New York, Ny 10017
2. By Bank transfer: Bank Leumi  
10, Hadera Branch 953, account  
74803/11, IBAN IL65 0109 5300 0000  
7480 311, SWIFT: LUMIILITXXX
3. Check to Beit Theresienstadt, send to:  
Beit Theresienstadt, Givat Haim Ihud,  
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