

Dapei Keshar

Beit Theresienstadt Theresienstadt Martyrs Remembrance Association



"Take this Book of the Law... that it may be there as a witness against you"
(DEUTERONOMY 31, 26)



IN THIS ISSUE

At Beit Theresienstadt	2	Dr. Benjamin Z. Kedar	12
Yours	3	David Friedmann Portraits of the Prague	
News from Beit Theresienstadt	4	Jewish Community 1940-1941/	
Roots travel trip, Groag family / Itay Groag	7	Miriam Friedman Morris	13
News from the Educational Center	9	A Light Of Hope/	
Religious life in Ghetto Theresienstadt/		Dr. Tereza Maizels and Nitsan Ravid Elias	15
Dr. Margalit Shlain	10		
"A Hebrew diary from Ghetto Theresienstadt"/			

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On the cover: Pavel Fantl, Synagogue

Upcoming events

19.9.2022	Monday	18:00	"The Olympic Doll" A rescreening of the film and discussion with survivor Inge Auerbacher	Goethe-Institut, Tel Aviv
29.9.2022	Thursday	19:30	Opening of the exhibition "Days beyond time – artist meets testimony"	Hakimaron Hall Emek Hama'ayanot
4.11.2022	Friday	10:30	Conference of the next generations	Beit Theresienstadt
6.11.2022 20.11.2022 4.12.2022 18.12.2022	Sunday	20:00	Series of online lectures in English (information available on the Beit Theresienstadt website)	Zoom
27.1.2023	Friday	10:30	"Israelis and the Holocaust" Lecture by Shachar Sklash on memory, myths, and how Israelis tell themselves the story of the Holocaust	Beit Theresienstadt

Registration at: 04-6369515, 058-6369515 info@bterezin.org.il You are warmly invited

Membership Dues for 2020: 70\$ single, 100\$ couples



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To all members and friends of Beit Theresienstadt



The new year is approaching; we can look back with satisfaction and forwards with anticipation. The last year at Beit Theresienstadt was a year full of activities, though it began with un-certainty and concerns. Looking back, it is hard to remember the deliberations that preceded the opening of the

exhibition "Days beyond time - artist meets testimony" at the Art & About gallery, occasioned by a new wave of Covid - the decision to hold the "March of the Living Scroll" in a limited and cautious format (for the same reason), and other careful steps on the way to resuming a routine.

In all areas, a great deal of work was carried out. The archive, managed by Dr. Tereza Maizels, is changing its appearance and being adapted to the future. Nitsan Ravid Elias will soon be finishing the project involving arranging the recorded testimonies (both audio and video). Eli Mikulinser and Michael Blumenfeld are making good progress with the cataloguing and scanning. Talma Cohen is arranging the files and rediscovering treasures - interesting stories, documents, and photographs. Our volunteers, Ilana Schnabel, Ilana Ravid, and Miriam Prager, are proceeding with the transliteration of testimonies and the translation of documents. At the educational center managed by Noa David (mazel tov on the birth of her son) new programs and educational kits have been prepared. While Noa

was on maternity leave, Hani Pultorak assumed responsibility for advancing the programs and regular visits, and of course we warmly thank our guides, the first and usually only staff encountered by all visitors to Beit Theresienstadt.

Erela Talmi, head of public relations at Beit Theresienstadt, is known by all. In recent years, Erela has made many efforts to maintain contact with the next generations, and accordingly we are endeavoring to change and update Beit Theresienstadt's activities to suit the changing nature of the place and the spirit of the times. Naomi Kadosh, the secretary of the educational center, makes sure that all the special programs are indeed executed, side by side with everyday plans, so this is an opportunity to thank the entire wonderful staff of Beit Theresienstadt, whose productive efforts are evident.

"March of the Living Scroll" journey was a highlight this year. We have chosen to devote this issue to the topic of religious life in Ghetto Theresienstadt, in tribute to the Torah scroll with which Beit Theresienstadt was entrusted by the Memorial Scrolls Trust in London. The scroll will be used for educational activities involving the Jewish communities in Bohemia and Moravia that were destroyed.

We are on the cusp of a new year, with lots of ideas, programs, and new exhibitions. May we have a good, productive, healthy, and happy year.

Yours, Tami Kinberg
Director of Beit Theresienstadt



Ceremony for Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day

On Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day 2022, a moving ceremony was held at Beit Theresienstadt, attended by ghetto survivors, Czech Ambassador to Israel, Mr. Martin Stropnický, Slovak Ambassador to Israel, Mr. Igor Maukš, Deputy Chief of Mission at the German embassy, Dr. Jörg Walendy, Cultural Attaché at the German embassy, Mr. Hayato Richard S. Xu-Yamato, Head of the General and Consular Cluster at the Dutch embassy, Ms. Wilma Blok, Mayor of the Emek Hefer Regional Council, Galit Shaul, officers and soldiers, members of the Beit El congregation, and many other guests. This year the ceremony marked 80 years to the initial deportations from Ghetto Theresienstadt to the east. On January 9, 1942, about three weeks after the ghetto was established, the first transport left for the "east". This was a breaking point for the ghetto inmates and the Jewish leadership, who until then had thought that Theresienstadt



would be a place of refuge. From that day and throughout the ghetto's existence, many transports left for the death camps and various killing grounds, bearing over 85,000 men, women, and children. "Terror of the transports" was the name given to the ghetto inmates' fear of deportation to the "east". The summons for a transport was unexpected; it could come at any moment, tearing people from their family, friends, and everything they knew, to the unknown...

The ceremony was accompanied by two songs performed by singer Einat Azulay, and culminated with the Beit El school's student choir, who performed a moving rendition of the song "Lu Yehi". After the song, the children in the choir symbolically distributed red roses to the audience.

Six survivors lit the torches: Tommy Shacham, Tzipora Hochman, Gideon Lev, Eva Hefer, Hana Sternlicht, and Einav Bachner Neemani, granddaughter of the late Eli Bachner. ■

Opening of the exhibition "Days Beyond Time – Artist Meets Testimony" at the Herzliya Hebrew Gymnasium in Tel Aviv



During April-May 2022 the exhibition "Days Beyond Time – Artist Meets Testimony" was on display at the Herzliya Hebrew Gymnasium in Tel Aviv, which generously gave us the use of a hall for this purpose. Displaying the exhibition in Tel Aviv, among Israel's most important cities, provided access to a large audience comprised of both teens and the general public. The exhibition was accompanied by a fascinating discussion with some of the survivors and artists, where survivors Vera Meisels and Eva Erben shared their experience of participating in the project, their initial encounter with the artwork inspired by their testimony, and their worldview on Holocaust remembrance.

In addition, a gallery discussion was held with the initiators of the exhibition, Maya and Gal Rave, the exhibition's curator Yossi Veissid, and artists who participated in the project.

The exhibition was viewed by a large audience, including media personnel from the culture and art scene who subsequently published reviews. ■

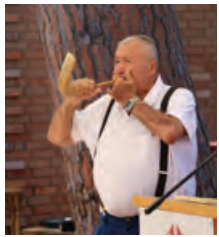


Concluding event – "March of the Living Scroll" journey and the Torah scroll brought from Olomouc to Beit Theresienstadt

In May we embarked on a journey following a Czech Torah scroll that had survived the Holocaust and was brought to the UK six decades ago for safekeeping.

In a special march held on May 15, the scroll was returned to the Czech Theresienstadt ghetto at a ceremony marking 77 years since liberation of the ghetto, and from there it continued to Israel and was welcomed at Beit Theresienstadt in a festive event.

The Torah scroll that arrived at Beit Theresienstadt is one of 1,564 Czech Torah scrolls brought to Prague during the Second World War. Under the communist regime, the scrolls were kept together with other Judaica from Czech Jewish communities in a destroyed synagogue under terrible conditions, until redeemed by a British benefactor in 1964 and brought to London. Some of the scrolls were restored and reinstated in Jewish communities around the world.



Gershon Weiss z"l

The journey to receive the Torah scroll included the "March of the Living Scroll", initiated by the Theresienstadt Association in collaboration with the international "March of the Living Scroll" and B'nai B'rith organizations as well as the Terezin Memorial. The march began at the

Bohusovice train station and continued to the city of Theresienstadt, following the same route taken by Jews deported to Ghetto Theresienstadt. At Theresienstadt a touching ceremony was held, attended by ghetto survivors from Israel: Dita Kraus who as a girl was deported from the ghetto to Auschwitz, to the children's barracks in the "family camp", and Hana Sternlicht, whose parents were killed in Auschwitz and who survived the forced labor camps Freiberg and Mauthausen on her own.



The survivors were joined by leaders of the Federation of Jewish Communities in Bohemia and Moravia, Petr Papoušek and Tomáš Kraus, Czech rabbis, and Israeli and Czech youth.

The concluding event of the "March of the Living Scroll" project, when the Torah scroll arrived at Beit Theresienstadt, took place in the presence of Mr. Petr Papoušek, President of the Federation of Czech Jewish Communities, the Deputy Head of Mission for the Czech Embassy, Mrs. Kateřina Moravcová, Mr. Jeffrey Ohrenstein, chairman of the MST trust, representatives of B'nai B'rith, survivors, and members of the Theresienstadt Association. Master violinist Eyal Shiloach and pianist Dr. Yuri Brener were entrusted with the artistic part of the honorable event.

The educational center is now preparing an educational program for Bar and Bat Mitzvah boys and girls that will center on the historical story of the Czech communities, and the Torah scroll will feature in this program. Moreover, the scroll will be included in a new museum display on religious life in Ghetto Theresienstadt. ■



Mr. Petr Papoušek, Mrs. Kateřina Moravcová and Mr. Daniel Shek



Maestro Eyal Shiloach

Visit to Beit Theresienstadt by Mr. Hili Tropper, Minister of Culture

In May, Minister of Culture Mr. Hili Tropper visited Beit Theresienstadt. Daniel Shek, chairman of the board of directors, told him about the legacy of the founders and the vision of Beit Theresienstadt, referring to the extensive activity and current projects. Then, the minister was given a tour of the museum's exhibitions. Particularly emphasized was the nineteenth century Torah scroll previously used by the Olomouc community, which reached Beit Theresienstadt as part of the "March of the Living Scroll". ■



From Left: Erela Talmi, Hili Tropper, Daniel Shek, Liora Livni Cohen, Hani Pultorak

International master classes – history, music, and memory

As every year, this summer too a dozens young musicians gathered for a week of music and history, in which they practiced and played various compositions, among them musical pieces from Ghetto Theresienstadt. We were pleased to return to the youth village "Ben Yakir" in Kefar Haroeh close to Beit Theresienstadt. The village lawns and the pleasant classrooms were filled with the sounds of bowed string instruments and singing voices. Maestro Eyal Shiloach and the very best teachers instructed the students and prepared them for the concert. The participants of the seminar visited Beit Theresienstadt and learnt about the daily life and the story of the children in the ghetto.

The festive concluding concert of the master classes took place this year in the Sharet hall (Petach Tikva). The participants performed various works, including music played



and performed in the ghetto as well as a classical repertoire. The height of the event this year was a production of the children's opera "Brundibar" by Hans Krasa, the last work he managed to write before his deportation to the Theresienstadt ghetto in August 1942. The opera scenes were produced by Katya Rosenberg and conducted by Orit Shiloach. ■



Survivors' Meeting



In honour of the new year, the survivors of Ghetto Theresienstadt were invited for a festive gathering in Beit Theresienstadt. Some of them had not seen each other for years, while for others it was an opportunity to become acquainted with survivors they had not known before. Around tables filled with delights, all the participants briefly told a little bit about themselves. The violinist Bea Sharon entertained with Klezmer music. At the end of the event, the survivors gathered for a group photo. ■

Roots travel trip, Groag family / Itay Groag

In addition to his virtues as an exceptional individual and his unique life story that began in the Czech city of Olomouc (1914) and ended in Kibbutz Maanit (2001), Willi Groag was also our father and grandfather. Like many of his acquaintances and friends, we too were privileged to live with and enjoy Willi, who was an artist, educator, industrialist, human being.

lot facing the small fortress at Theresienstadt, where the Gestapo officers had lived and where a considerable part of the horrors in the ghetto occurred. In front of the fortress a large cemetery was established after the war, to which were transferred the graves of Jews and Christians murdered in the Holocaust. The sight of hundreds of headstones on a backdrop



We had the privilege of hearing his stories of a childhood in Czechoslovakia before the Second World War, the tribulations and hard memories from the Holocaust and the deportation of his family to Ghetto Theresienstadt, concluding with the revivification of his life when he subsequently immigrated to the land of Israel, to Kibbutz Maanit.

We embarked on a unique once-in-a-lifetime roots travel trip together with the entire family: Eva, Anat, and Gidi, Willi's children, and all 9 grandchildren (+ one 6-month-old great-granddaughter), to visit the geographical places where he had lived in Czechoslovakia and those of his second wife Tamar in Slovakia.

Prague, the Czech Republic – July 2022

Symbolically, we began the journey in Prague, the Czech capital. We converged from 3 countries around the world: US, the Netherlands, and Israel. For those visiting for the first time, the city is an enchanting European destination that combines a wealth of history and Jewish sites. We visited the Jewish Quarter and the museum with its exhibition of children's drawings from Ghetto Theresienstadt. These are part of the collection of children's drawings that Willi brought with him from the ghetto at the end of the war, rescuing them so they could become unique documents and memories. The museum walls perpetuate in handwriting the names of those who perished on Czech soil during the Holocaust. Thousands of names cover entire walls, arranged by the different concentration and death camps. The Jewish cemetery is adjacent to the synagogue.

Trip to the Theresienstadt concentration camp

On the second morning of the journey, it took us less than an hour to travel from the center of Prague to a parking

of the entrance gate to the fortress, is a strong illustration of the horror. Then again, Theresienstadt is surrounded by green fields, with rich agriculture, a pastoral scene in an Eastern European country that had been through the communist era, as evident in the simplicity of its people. And among these contrasts, we tried to contain the story of our family. A family of industrialists, from the upper class, whose children were educated and that ran a family plant for manufacturing malt – Groag Malt Fabric – was deported together with tens of thousands of Jews from Czech Jewish communities and the vicinity, to a concentration camp built as a military fortress, devoid of humaneness, rights, and hope. How did this happen, and how did the Groag family, deported to the ghetto, survive there despite the harsh conditions?

On the path leading from the parking lot to the entrance gate of the fortress, it is hard to keep back the tears, and we remain silent and self-contained in preparation for our first encounter with what remains of the horrors from Willi's stories and the testimonies of the survivors.

We were warmly welcomed by Jan Roubinek, the director of the museum, and the staff of the archives at Theresienstadt. To our amazement, caricatures drawn by Emo and original drawings by Truda, donated (by Nava Shan) and kept in the museum archives, were displayed for us in the main meeting room. The staff told us about the activities of the commemoration enterprise, the preservation of the buildings, and their close contact with the Beit Theresienstadt museum in Givat Haim. It was a very emotional experience.

In Theresienstadt (a military camp established as a large fortress and transformed into a ghetto by the Nazis) we visited the famous building where the men would play soccer (the film – Liga Terezin).

Roots travel trip, Groag family / Itay Groag



Willi's children, Eva, Anat and Gidi with Dr. Roubinek

During a walking tour of the site, we were able to see the exact same view as Willi did when he photographed the Christian hospital where his wife Miriam gave birth to their daughter Eva, born in the ghetto, from the window of their room in the L414 building, during the Holocaust. We now saw it 77 years later, from a completely different perspective. Time seemed to have frozen in those moments and we could imagine Willi, the young father, standing at the window and taking the picture.

We visited the L410 building, which housed the girls' dorm that was Willi's responsibility, where 240 young and older girls lived throughout the Holocaust.

After the war ended, Willi brought to the Jewish community center in Prague suitcases with drawings made by children under the tutelage of the famous artist Friedl Dicker-Brandeis, before she was deported to the Birkenau death camp. As part of his role teaching the girls in the L410 building, he was in contact with Friedl. Some of the drawings are currently on display in several exhibitions around the world.

Olomouc, Willi's hometown

Strangely, anyone who knew Willi well could find a similarity between the Old City of Olomouc and Willi himself. A classic, with beautiful, superior architecture, surrounded by agricultural landscapes, beer, and a special general atmosphere characteristic of Olomouc to this day.

The extensive Groag family that lived in Olomouc before the war included Willi's parents, Emo and Truda, his uncle, renowned architect Jacques Groag, and Willi's brothers, Jan and Lev. The family owned, as stated, a leading factory in the Olomouc area, Groag Malt Fabric, which produced malt for the beer industry. Distilleries from the area would purchase from the family plant different kinds of malt for the process of brewing beer. As a young man, Willi was sent to Belgium to study for a PhD in chemistry, so that he could later become part of the family business with its long-term involvement in this field.

Petr Papousek, President of the Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic and a resident of Olomouc, accompanied us on a tour of the city. The Jewish community has a building in the center of Olomouc, with a synagogue and rooms for community events held throughout the year. We visited the Jewish cemetery, which contains several headstones of family members from previous generations. We visited a house designed by Willi's uncle, architect Jacques Groag, which still stands in one of Olomouc's wealthy neighborhoods. We had the privilege of visiting 2 homes of the Groag family, of which one had been divided into smaller units and been slightly renovated. The second, where the family lived in an apartment, is currently under renovations. In Olomouc too, despite the passing decades, Willi's memories and roots touched us and left us stimulated despite the time that had elapsed and the different eras.

In the nearby town of Tinchek, where the family plant had proudly stood, almost nothing remains of the former building, aside from 2 small houses that were renovated, flanked by other houses built on the land previously occupied by the plant.

In no time at all, an older inquisitive neighbor approached us, and with the help of Google Translate we managed to interview him and hear that he had been 13 years old when the war broke out and the Nazis occupied Czechoslovakia; at the time, he had been living several dozen kilometers from Tinchek.

As a child who walked on the very street where we were standing and talking, he related that he remembered a large plant that manufactured malt for beer.

After 4 days in the Czech Republic, we continued our journey to northern Slovakia, to the town of Košice where Tamar, Willi's second wife, was born, and from where she fled to Israel before the war began. There we learned about Tamar's roots and discovered the family stories, which are related and recorded elsewhere.

After 7 days of a one-in-a-lifetime roots travel trip, we returned home with the feeling that we had completed a meaningful and important chapter in the documenting, memory, appreciation, and recognition of people who had survived the Holocaust and founded a state here. This is a story and memory that we will convey to the next generations, in the hope that they too will be able to return one day to the Czech Republic and Slovakia in a journey following our family history. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff of the Beit Theresienstadt museum in Givat Haim for the strong relationship over the years and the constant desire to record and commemorate the history of the Groag family and the families of the survivors and victims at Ghetto Theresienstadt. ■

News from the Educational Center

From March to May, many varied activities took place at Beit Theresienstadt.

In addition to our regular audience of elementary and junior high school students, we were also visited by eleventh and twelfth graders, as part of nationwide trips as well as for the matriculation exam in history in the Sachlav track.

Towards Holocaust Remembrance Day we held a seminar for the administrative management of the Defense Ministry, attended by the Director General, Major General (res.) Amir Eshel, and the senior management. The participants received guided tours of the museum's exhibitions and met with ghetto survivor Zvi Cohen, who told them his captivating and moving life story. ■



Over the past months we also hosted at Beit Theresienstadt groups of soldiers, Holocaust survivors, and retirees. These included a group of police officers from the Menashe region, who managed to spare the necessary time in addition to their routine work. ■



A moving encounter took place between Holocaust survivors from the "Amcha" club in Netanya and students from the Shafririm school in Givat Haim Ichud. The students prepared an indulging breakfast for the survivors, conversed with them around round tables, and shared an arts and crafts activity, and in conclusion they sang and danced together. ■



In addition, we hosted groups of youth and student guides from abroad, who came from South American and European countries. These included a group of German students who were in Israel for the opening events of the Maccabiah, as part of a student exchange program with the Academic College at Wingate. ■



Religious life in Ghetto Theresienstadt / Dr. Margalit Shlain

The equal rights gradually granted to European Jews beginning from the late 18th century led to their integration as active citizens in all areas of life and initiated processes of secularization that for many resulted in elimination of the need to observe the religious precepts, as well as the practice of civil marriage (including to non-Jews), and even conversion, culminating in a considerable diminishing of the number of Jews who remained loyal to Jewish tradition.

In Ghetto Theresienstadt (1941–1945), established in practice with the purpose of gathering (mostly Central European) Jews before deporting them to the death camps, religious life was never particularly intensive. The proportion of observant Jews among all those deported to the ghetto was extremely low, and they made many efforts to continue observing the commandments and the Jewish festivals even in the strenuous conditions of the ghetto. Nonetheless, the Jewish self-administration of the ghetto managed to hold religious services – even those forbidden in other places under the Nazi occupation – with the silent acquiescence of the German command at Ghetto Theresienstadt.

Religious services in Ghetto Theresienstadt

■ **Synagogues – prayers in a quorum** – In the first half of 1942, synagogues were established at Theresienstadt in the following barracks: Magdeburg, Cavalier, Podmokly, Sudeten, and in the attics of the Hamburg and Hanover barracks, in the freezing cold in winter and suffocating heat in summer. Services were held on Sabbaths and holidays and the small rooms barely contained the regular worshippers. Older people who found it hard to ascend the many steps leading to the attics asked at times to be carried up.

The increase in the number of Rabbis deported to Theresienstadt in 1942–1943 expanded the number of worshippers, which included many who had become distant from the faith but sought comfort and maybe even hope in the traditional prayers – particularly on the High Holy Days, when they featured well-known Czech and German cantors. Among the famed Rabbis were: Richard Feder from Moravia, Dr. Leo Baeck and Regina Jonas from Berlin, Dr. Benjamin Marmorstein from Vienna, and Rabbi Max Friediger from Denmark. On Sabbath eves and festivals, youth services were held in the attic at the German-speaking children's house. A rabbi and a cantor were assigned to each synagogue. Services were held concurrently, according to tradition, every week and holiday. Many Jews had brought with them to the ghetto Torah scrolls, Megillah scrolls, Haggadah books, prayer books for the holidays, and religious artifacts: shofars, Chanuka menorahs and kiddush cups, prayer shawls and phylacteries. The language of the sermons was adapted to the congregants. The many deportations from Theresienstadt to the east reduced the number of prayer groups and resulted in the merging of worshippers from several groups of origin. By October 1944 all religious matters were managed by Rabbi Neuhaus and Rabbi Friediger.



Drawing: Leo Haas

■ **Torah study** – A type of Yeshiva was maintained in the ghetto, attended by fifteen young religious Czech and German Orthodox men aged fifteen and older, who did not work on the Sabbath and organized "Oneg Shabbat" parties with Sabbath songs. Their rabbi was R. Yitzhak Chaim (Ernst) Lieben of Prague. There were also private "studies", for instance Sinai Adler learned Gemara with Aharon Epstein of Prague, who was a dayan (religious judge) and teacher of Jewish law. Among the young, more efforts were invested in Jewish-national-Zionist education than in religious education, although significance was ascribed to observance of the Sabbath and festivals as part of building their self- and collective identity.

In Ghetto Theresienstadt partial traditional life transition ceremonies were held, constituting a continuation of Jewish life in the central European communities that had been destroyed.

Marriage – Although Theresienstadt offered no option of shared quarters for couples or civil marriage, a life partnership could be declared in the registry department. Rabbis held marriage ceremonies even when the couple were not observant, because this was the only way to hold a marriage ceremony and to protect one's spouse from deportation.

■ **Circumcision** – The dilemma of whether to have children during the Holocaust was further aggravated at Ghetto Theresienstadt when, in July 1943, the camp commander forbade all pregnancies, threatening that any babies born would be killed and the parents deported to the east. A special case was that of ten women who in March 1944 received permission to keep their pregnancies and give birth in the ghetto, including Greta Beck, who gave birth to a son on March 20, 1944. The father, Egon Redlich, was insistent on having his son circumcised following Jewish tradition, a choice not shared by the parents of all sons born in the ghetto.

■ **Bar-Mitzva ceremonies** – It was mostly observant families that made an effort to hold Bar-Mitzva ceremonies. Boys who reached the appropriate age received instruction on being called up for the Torah. In March 1944 Eli Bachner's father

asked the rabbi to teach his son in preparation for his Torah reading on May 20. "I was well prepared, but the transport came and ruined all the plans... On May 17 or 18 we were loaded on the cattle cars and on to... Auschwitz".

■ **Funerals and burials** – A department for managing burials was established in each building, obligated to report all deaths and to take care of the dead. Funerals were held throughout the day. For each funeral, a rabbi and cantor were on weekly duty. At first, each departed person was given a separate grave, however the high death rate demanded a transition to mass burial, carried out by young men at night after a hard day of work. One of the cells in the city walls was transformed into a purification room for the dead; nearby was a hall with a prayer platform, and beneath this platform there were thirty-five coffins at a time. The ceremony would begin with the cantor singing, followed by the rabbi's eulogy for each of the dead. The Germans, who feared an epidemic, "solved" the burial problem by building a crematorium and by October 1942 four furnaces were already in operation, manned by Jews from the camp. The ashes were collected in cardboard boxes bearing the name of the deceased and interred in the "columbarium" – underground niches located in the fortress ramparts. In early November 1944 the Germans instructed that the ashes of the deceased be disposed of, and over 25,000 boxes of ashes were emptied into the Ohře river. Towards the visit of the Red Cross delegation in Theresienstadt on April 6, 1945, burials were renewed. Boxes of ashes were placed in the crematorium and, to deceive the visitors, a fake graveyard was prepared with 600 "graves" and flowerbeds.

■ **Observation of the Sabbath and Jewish holidays at Ghetto Theresienstadt** – At first, the Sabbath was a day of rest in the ghetto, but the diminishing workforce required inmates to work throughout the week with no option of resting on Sabbath or holidays, or of observing a religious life style.

■ **Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur** – On Rosh Hashana eve 1942 and 1943, the Council of Elders prepared a blessing for the congregation, asking that solidarity be maintained. Yom Kippur was a regular workday. Participation in prayer services was allowed only until 4 am and many inmates, particularly the elderly, fasted with no pre-fast meal.

A particularly significant prayer service was held on Yom Kippur eve in 1944 (on September 26). Cantor Avraham Hellmann stood, together with two thousand other men, on the platform at Theresienstadt, waiting for the train that would take them to Auschwitz. Charlotte, his wife, described the occasion: "It was Kol Nidrei eve. My husband said: 'It's time to pray'. He placed two suitcases one on top of the other and covered them with a Tallit; he stood with Levin and his son from Komotau in Bohemia and the three put their prayer shawls over their heads and when my husband began to pray out loud, a bitter cry rose from the throats of all the men and women. One who was not there cannot even imagine it. It is necessary to understand that most of the Czech Jews were not religious... So things continued until the next day



Drawing: Felix Bloch

– Yom Kippur... for two days with no sleep. People sat on their cases. During Yom Kippur whoever wanted joined the prayers. My husband chanted the "U'Netane Token" and an old man, apparently a rabbi from Slovakia, removed his shoes and recited in a fearful cry – Viduy (confession)..."

■ **Sukkot** – Several ritual tabernacles were built in the barrack yards. Rabbi Deutsch had a very small lulav (palm frond) that was used to observe the commandment.

■ **Chanukah** – In all the youth dormitories, candles were lit on the festival of Chanukah in self-made wood or tin Chanukah Menorahs. "There was also a delivery of 'Chanukah gelt', prepared over several weeks". Observant Jews and many guests gathered to light Chanukah candles, sing holiday songs, speak about the origins of the holiday in the time of the Hasmoneans, the consecration of the altar, and the miracle of the oil cruse.

■ **Purim** – In the synagogues in the Sudeten and Magdeburg barracks, the Scroll of Esther was read during the holiday services. Children were allowed to celebrate the Purim festival.

■ **Passover** – Many public Passover seders, organized by the Jewish Council, as well as private seders, were celebrated at Ghetto Theresienstadt. Due to the lack of Matza and potatoes, hametz was consumed on Passover and the rabbis in Theresienstadt gave permission to eat the small portion of meat distributed throughout the holiday, even when it contained pork. In April 1945 one of the bakery departments was set aside to manufacture Matza and worked ceaselessly for three shifts, day and night. To receive the Passover Matza it was necessary to register, however those who did so had to forego their bread ration for nine days, such that instead of three kilos of bread they received only one kilo of matza. It was also possible to receive potatoes instead of legumes. Only those with a strong will who were willing to remain hungry could withstand these conditions. There was no way to obtain wine for kiddush so they used different coffee and tea substitutes.

■ **Kashrut** – Observant Jews found it hard to continue

Religious life in Ghetto Theresienstadt / Dr. Margalit Shlain

maintaining a religious life style in the ghetto. Very few observed the religious dietary laws of Kashrut. Due to the difficulty involved in finding replacements for non-kosher food and in order to remain alive, they were willing to eat food prepared in the general kitchen.

■ Christian communities at Theresienstadt

Those deported to Theresienstadt included Christians who were considered Jews under the "Nazi race laws". In October 1942 they received a type of official recognition when the Council of Elders allowed them to use a theatre hall for their Sunday and holiday services. The Christian prayer group of Hamburg deportees, led by Dr. Arthur Goldschmidt of Hamburg and his assistant, Dr. Otto Stargardt of Berlin, gradually grew to become a mixed Protestant congregation, with some 150-200 members from different churches: Lutherans, the Reform Church, Hussites, and others. When a considerable number of Catholics arrived in Theresienstadt, they too formed a congregation led by Donat of Vienna and Gerzon of Germany and held services every Sunday, at first in the same attic. The Jewish inmates treated them variably. Those born Christian or baptized as children were considered "neutral". Jews who had converted as adults were treated differently and designated

deserters and traitors. Ultimately, they were tolerated and even treated kindly.

By May 1944, Christians constituted about 15% of all inmates, and from late December 1944 to mid-April 1945 their proportion rose and reached 36%. At this time, they were allocated several prayer rooms for each community. In the Christian prayer rooms, regular services were held on Sundays and the major Christian festivals were celebrated. The coffins of Christian inmates were taken to a special hall allocated to them in the crematorium, where burial ceremonies were held with no Christian symbols due to objections, although a large cross was allowed towards the end of the camp's existence. Over the approximately three and half years of Ghetto Theresienstadt, about one hundred and sixty thousand Jews were interred, including those considered Jews under the "Nazi race laws". The large majority perished during this period, whether of sickness and hunger in the ghetto or after their deportation to the death camps in the east, undistinguished by their secular outlook or religious affiliation. On liberation day, May 8, 1945, 30,000 inmates remained, including 12,000 who had arrived at Theresienstadt on the death marches in the camp's final three weeks. ■

"A Hebrew diary from Ghetto Theresienstadt" / Dr. Benjamin Z. Kedar

Dr. Berthold Jeiteles, younger brother of my grandfather, Dr. Isidor Jeiteles, lived in Prague all his life. He studied chemistry at the Prague University, earned his PhD, and published several professional articles, but then decided to change direction and devote his life to studying Talmud. In this field as well, he published a series of articles in the 1920s and 1930s and wrote several books. In July 1942, aged 70, he was deported to Ghetto Theresienstadt. There he began to write a journal in Rabbinical Hebrew. After liberation he lived three years in Prague (where I met him twice, as a child). In 1948 he migrated to New York and lived with my aunt Sophie Rosenbaum and her husband Yona until his death in 1958.

In the 1970s I learned from Prof. Aharon Bondi, my mother's cousin, about the Hebrew journal. Although I was curious to read it, no one could point me to its whereabouts. In 1997 I took advantage of a stay in the US to search for the journal among the papers of Berthold Jeiteles – whom everyone called Onkel Berl – that had been deposited at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS), with no success. Several years later, while surfing the web, I discovered that a file with personal papers belonging to Berthold, related to Theresienstadt, was in the YIVO archives in New York. In 2013 I visited there and found in the file, among many unsorted documents, nine surviving pages of the journal. They were mixed in with dozens of papers that Berthold had collected in an attempt to record everyday life in the ghetto.

I received permission to photocopy the pages of the journal and the documents, and to be doubly safe I photocopied each

page twice. However, upon my return to Israel it became clear that Berthold's handwriting was extremely hard to read, such that I could only decipher a small part of the texts. In 2019 I showed a sample of the manuscript to my friend, Prof. Malachi Beit Arié, a renowned expert on Hebrew manuscripts, and he advised me to request the assistance of Dr. Yakov Fuchs from the National Library. Dr. Fuchs complied with my request and managed to decipher a large part of the text; I later managed to improve upon his efforts in some places. However, due to the poor quality of the paper and the time that had elapsed, several words remained illegible. My friend Prof. Simcha Emanuel from the Department of Talmud at the Hebrew University added explanations of Talmudic terms used by Berthold.

At this stage I consulted with Prof. Yehuda Bauer, also of the Hebrew University, and he recommended publishing the remains of the journal, because it was written in Hebrew, because its author was 70 years old when he was deported to the ghetto – an old man in contemporary terms – and because he had been an Orthodox Jew. So, I contacted Dr. Margalit Shlain, an expert on the history of Ghetto Theresienstadt, and suggested that we cooperate in publishing the remains of the journal. I was glad when she agreed and further illuminated various affairs mentioned, even adding an opening chapter on religious life in the ghetto.

Sixty-three years after the death of Bertold, the remains of his journal were published by Beit Theresienstadt.

David Friedmann Portraits of the Prague Jewish Community 1940–1941 A Timestamp in History during the Nazi Occupation / Miriam Friedman Morris

A revisit and update to my 2006 article for “Dapei Keshet” about my search for my father’s lost art. What has happened in those sixteen years? Exciting discoveries of prewar art and more portraits.

The Artist and Backstory

David Friedman(n) was born December 20, 1893, in Mährisch Ostrau, Austria-Hungary, (Ostrava, Czechia). In 1911, he ventured to Berlin and studied etching with Hermann Struck and painting with Lovis Corinth. During WWI, he served in the Austro-Hungarian Army as a battle artist. He automatically became a Czechoslovak citizen after the war’s end in 1918, and returned to Berlin. Friedmann achieved acclaim for his portraits drawn from life and became a leading press artist of the 1920’s, sketching hundreds of cultural icons such as Albert Einstein and Max Brod.

The Nazi regime abruptly upended Friedmann’s flourishing career in 1933. Friedmann fled to Prague in 1938, with his wife Mathilde and infant daughter Mirjam Helene, escaping the Nazis with only his artistic talent as a means to survive. The Gestapo looted his oeuvre left behind in Berlin. In Prague he worked as an artist again, sketching the leaders of the Jewish Community and officials of the Palestine Office, many of them prominent Zionists, later murdered in Auschwitz. My father made it known he wished to produce an album and received orders for portraits. After deportation to the Lodz Ghetto in 1941, Nazi authorities looted his Prague production as well. He depicted human fate as a prisoner in the Lodz Ghetto, the Auschwitz subcamp Gleiwitz I, and as a survivor. His wife and daughter were murdered. Liberated at 51-years, Friedmann believed he lived for a reason as noted in his 1945 postwar diary [in German]. “These were powerful images I saw – to give form to all that misery – to show it to the world – this was always my intent.” The art series was titled, “Because They Were Jews!”

In 1948, in Prague, Friedmann wed Hildegard Taussig (1921–1989) a survivor of Theresienstadt, Auschwitz and Christianstadt. High-ranking military officers wanted his artwork for Prague’s War Museum. Defying an export prohibition, the couple fled communist Czechoslovakia to Israel in 1949, thus saving his artwork, albums, and historical documents. The following year, I was born and named after my father’s first daughter.

In 1954, the Friedmann family immigrated to America and settled in St. Louis, Missouri. I grew up immersed in the world of art and culture. One day my father took an album from the bookcase and there, at the dining room table, I learned more about his art and losses.

Miracles of Survival

The album returned to my father shows 50 postcard-size portrait prints and photos. Among the subjects are Jakob Edelstein, Franz Weidmann, Fredy Hirsch, and many

still nameless today. The serious faces reflect the stress of persecution and an uncertain future. I was captivated. At my request, my father entrusted this treasure to me at the age of 22 years. I wondered how he could part with the album, a profound piece of his past and the people he had sketched and befriended. My father added names and captions for numerous portraits – invaluable clues for the task ahead – to identify and learn the fate of each subject – and reconstruct the story.

Thus began a decades-long project in 1994. I shared the portraits worldwide and several subjects were recognized by survivors. Portraits were discovered at the National Museum and Jewish Museum in Prague, Beit Terezin in Israel, and private collections.

At the National Museum theater department, three identical postcard-size portraits of František Zelenka awaited me. The fourth is displayed in my father’s album along with duplicates of Dr. Leo Kraus and Viktor Popper. I wondered what was the significance of the identical duplicate portraits.

The story continued to unfold. Thirty-six postcard-size portraits and a photo of a drawing of Dr. Adolf Beneš, surfaced at Beit Terezin. Among this collection are Franz Kahn, Leo Janowitz, and Otto Zucker, whose portrait was published in the December 27, 1940 issue of the Jüdisches Nachrichtenblatt, the only newspaper allowed for Jews in Nazi-occupied Prague. Seven portraits were identical to those displayed in my father’s album: Hans Löw, Stefan Pollak, Rudolf Leipen, Wally Bloch, Ernst Jelinek, Viktor Popper and Hannah Steiner. However, the Eureka moment was Elly Eisinger. The Jewish Museum holds the original pen-and-ink drawings on tracing paper mounted on paper of Eisinger and Weidmann. Somehow the larger originals were used by my father to produce his smaller-sized prints.

Numerous portraits have dedications handwritten on the reverse side to Dr. Leo Kraus, the law department head of the Palestine Office in Prague. However, the Beit Terezin archive did not have the Kraus portrait or evidence he was the donor. Kraus was interviewed by Beit Terezin. At 98 years, he had no recollection of the portraits, but remembered the artist.

It is still a mystery how the collection survived, but the provocative question remains who donated the portraits to Beit Theresienstadt?

I contacted Dorit Gan-Mor, the daughter of Kraus, who searched among her father’s books and discovered his postcard-sized portrait, as well as Dr. Kurt Heller and Dr. Ruth Hoffe. I saw the identical Hoffe portrait in the collection of Judita Chudy. Twelve portraits belonged to her Uncle Natan, who gave them to a non-Jewish relative for safekeeping. Then, as fate would

have it, the charcoal pencil drawing of Hoffe emerged at the Jewish Museum. The missing link confirmed my father's method to produce the portrait-prints. His tracings were made "after" the completion of the larger, original portrait drawing.

To Summarize:

The drawings of Weidmann, Eisinger and Hoffe, are evidence they were used to produce the smaller postcard-size versions with the subject and artist signatures as part of the print. The portraits were ordered in multiples and exchanged between colleagues and friends, often with dedications on the reverse side.

Help Us Identify the Subjects. Can You Decipher These Signatures?

One of the starkest traumas of the Holocaust — people not only lost their lives, but also traces of their existence. A portrait may be the only image to remain of the victim. Impeding a successful search are subjects who signed only their surname, eg., Batscha, Adler, and those with common names like Otto Löwy. Even if the signature is legible, one cannot always confirm the identity. In the case of the two victims pictured below, the signatures are unreadable, even among Czech and German friends.



Klara, is the only subject with a real smile, but only her first name warrants a guess. The second portrait reads D. or Dr. Hermann. Subjects lacking a positive match despite signing a complete name are Hans Kaminsky and Fritz Löwenstein. The ID photo is imperative for comparison. However, the complete

Klara?



Who was Dr. Hermann?



name is necessary to search databases, testimony, documents, and deportation lists.

Ninety-four meticulously portrayed subjects by David Friedmann are known to have survived. The portraits are a testament to the enormous loss of lives, creative potential and accomplishments of the Jewish victims. The expressions he chose, his ability to capture emotions, the attitude of his line, all show us his thoughts. The portraits give face to numerous known and unknown victims — historically significant evidence of a dynamic Jewish community destroyed by the Nazi regime. Additional portraits could still be in private collections. In 2017, the post-card sized portrait of Stefan Engel was donated to the Jewish Museum. The artist's proof is displayed in his album donated to the Yad Vashem Art Museum. Unknown victims from the album are posted on the Yad Vashem website.

Thanks to the Terezin Institute, the Jewish Museum, Beit Terezin, Yad Vashem, the Chudy and Kraus families, the portraits appear online as a shared mission of education and remembrance. The fates of the known subjects are synchronized with the database of victims—Holocaust.cz. My journey's reward is the recognition of my father's work as a valuable resource and contribution to Holocaust history, as well as the preservation of his portraits for future generations. David Friedmann died February 27, 1980. ■

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<https://www.holocaust.cz/en/sources/expert-and-other-texts/david-friedmann-portraits-of-the-prague-jewish-community>

https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/he/exhibitions/last_portrait/friedmann.asp

https://collections.jewishmuseum.cz/index.php/Browse/modifyCriteria/facet/people_facet/id/185891

<http://z.umn.edu/becausetheywerejews>

A Light Of Hope / Dr. Tereza Maizels and Nitsan Ravid Elias

Religious life in Ghetto Theresienstadt was, against all chance, very rich and regularly maintained. Since this issue has not been portrayed in the permanent exhibitions at Beit Theresienstadt, we take this opportunity to address it in full with regard to both everyday and holiday prayers as well as Jewish life cycle and transition ceremonies. The opportunity arose following the "March of the Living Scroll", which culminated in the arrival of a Torah scroll seized during the Second World War from a Jewish community in the Olomouc district of Moravia.

Among the displays in the exhibition portrayed as part of the welcoming event were different religious objects, including a Torah shield that Rabbi Feder received for his eightieth birthday from the Jewish communities in Moravia. Many books were written about the life and activities of Rabbi Richard Feder. Feder, born in 1875, came to Prague and Vienna to study and officiated as a rabbi in several places until settling in Kolin. He had a strong and unique personality. We would like to portray his figure as reflected in the memories of his friends and acquaintances, presented by Zuzana Peterová in her book. Since we cannot relate to all his life events, we have chosen the darkest period, that of the Holocaust, when he lost his wife and most of his family. Rabbi Feder was deported to Ghetto Theresienstadt in the summer of 1942, when his values were severely tested. The ghetto, more than anywhere else, brought out his kindness, empathy, help for others, and attempts to form unity and belonging among the inmates.

When the Germans ordered that everyone must wear the yellow star, the rabbi visited the seamstress who sewed the clothes of many in the Jewish community. The seamstress thought that he had come to pick up clothes for his wife but she soon realized that the purpose of his visit was to update her regarding the new German edict. In an attempt to help others and to mitigate the deteriorating situation, the rabbi asked the seamstress to add the yellow star to all clothing items she sewed. His request was probably aimed at preventing the Jews of Kolin from breaking the new law and attracting the undesirable attention of the Germans. Also, as he explained to the seamstress, in hard times it is very important "to join our wise heads, thoughts, and hearts, and help each other". If there is no choice but to be subjected to more humiliation than at least "we shall be warmed by the knowledge" of who it was that sewed the badge on the clothes.

One of Rabbi Feder's responsibilities at Theresienstadt was to arrange for the last journey and burial of the deceased. In his memories he often shared the difficulties entailed by this role. After his wife died in the ghetto Rabbi Feder would visit the columbarium, where the boxes of ashes remaining from the deceased were kept, to talk to her, and he repeatedly expressed a wish to take the box with him after it was all over and he would once again be free. When the Germans ordered



the ashes dumped into the Ohře to hide their deeds, the rabbi did not conceal his sorrow. "Theresienstadt taught me, an old man, to cry".

Rabbi Richard Feder was an educator. Before the war, among other things, he taught Hebrew, and also wrote several textbooks. The mother of one of his students shared with the rabbi her concern for her husband, an illustrator, who under threat of the transports repeatedly drew the same drawing. The rabbi asked her to send her husband to him and offered the frustrated illustrator a job that involved illustrating his textbook. Later, he used the book when teaching Hebrew in the ghetto, where he encountered the illustrator once again. Among other things, they spoke about future cooperation and the illustrator told the rabbi about a sight that had been haunting him even from before the transport, which he drew constantly: A young boy peering over a fence and seeing a field, forest trees, and a squirrel on the other side. Whenever he drew this landscape he felt uncontrollable fear. In his interpretation, the Jews were on one side of the fence and the free world on the other. The rabbi, who understood the power of art to liberate and cure, obtained paper and pencils for the illustrator so that he could continue drawing. The illustrator did not survive the war, but his drawings did.

Rabbi Feder's ability to listen, to keep silent when necessary, and to express fundamental ideas simply and clearly, was characteristic of his loving personality. The readiness to help others at all times, to defend the just, as well as his modesty and wisdom, attracted many to him, and they shared their joys and sorrows and sought his advice and mental support.

Rabbi Feder remained at Ghetto Theresienstadt until the end of the war. After liberation he returned to Kolin, where he helped rebuild the Jewish community. Later, he served as Chief Rabbi of Brno. He was also involved in various memorialization activities. ■



"Days Beyond Time – Artist Meets Testimony"

Opening on September 29, 7:30PM

Hakimaron Hall, Emek Hama'ayanot



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