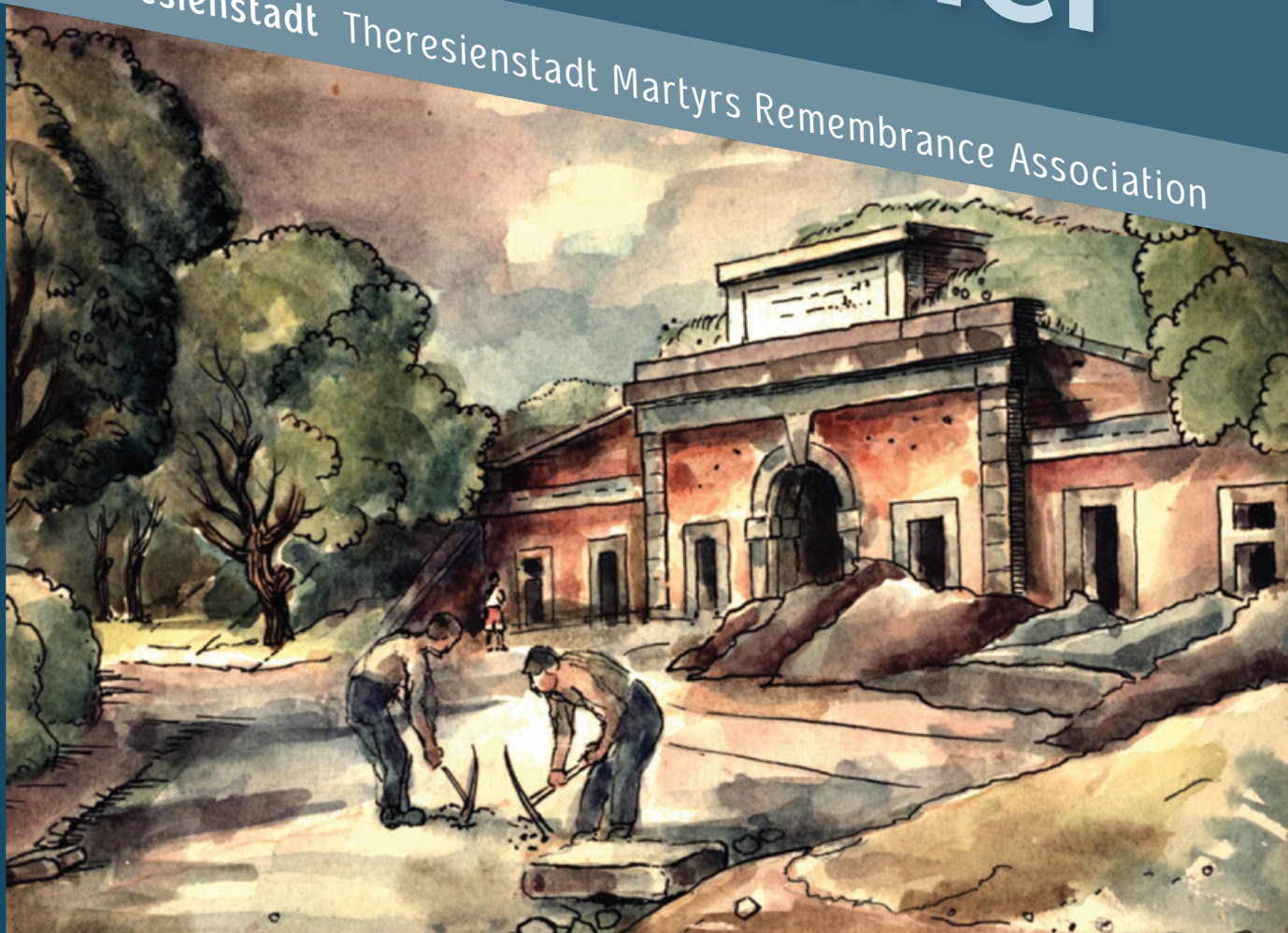


# Dapei Keshet

Beit Theresienstadt Theresienstadt Martyrs Remembrance Association

ISSUE No. 94 >> April 2023



Work in Ghetto Theresienstadt



THERESIENSTADT MARTYRS REMEMBRANCE ASSOCIATION

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**Editors and photography:** Beit Theresienstadt team    **Design:** Studio Orni Drori, Haifa    **Translation:** Rachel Kessel

On the cover: From Arthur Steindler's diary - Beit Terezin archive

### Table of scheduled events – Beit Theresienstadt

<b>2.4.2023</b>	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>20:00</b>	Zoom lecture (in Hebrew) by Shahar Sklash,	Zoom
<b>18.4.2023</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>09:45</b>	Holocaust Memorial Day Ceremony	Beit Theresienstadt, Givat Haim ihud
<b>19.5.2023</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>10:00</b>	Annual meeting	Beit Theresienstadt, Givat Haim ihud
<b>30.5.2023</b>	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>20:00</b>	every second Sunday Zoom lecture (English / Hebrew)	Zoom
<b>16.6.2023-3.7.2023</b>			Summer seminar in Berlin, Prague, and Terezin	

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

**Membership Dues for 2023: 70\$ single, 100\$ couples**



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## To all members and friends of Beit Theresienstadt



**T**his issue is being produced at a very difficult time for the State of Israel – a time of severe social rifts and upheavals. Many Holocaust survivors have been sharing with us their hard feelings of despair, anger, fear, and disappointment. One of these is our friend Eva Erben, who expressed her sentiments

in a short video clip that we posted on Facebook. We join the call of many local institutions to the politicians – stop the disintegration, direct your efforts at facilitating communication between the conflicted parties. It will not be possible to retain the intricate fabric of life in this country in the absence of wide agreement. Many of the state's founders are people who lost everything and started anew, built a home and a family from scratch, established enterprises and towns, and contributed to the economy and to society. Some experienced additional bereavement and lost their children in Israel's wars. These include not only Holocaust survivors but rather also immigrants from Arab countries who left everything behind in order to come to Israel. They and other ethnic groups and nations living in this country have in common the desire to create a safe and good place for themselves and their children. It is our duty to make every effort to preserve this country.

We were pained and sorrowed by the recent loss of Ruth Meisner, who continued to come to Beit Theresienstadt and

give testimony to various groups until the very end.

Ruth lost her son Benny, who was killed during his military service in the first Intifada. Despite the grave events she experienced throughout her life, Ruth's attitude to life was an outstanding example of optimism, appreciation, and inspiration for all those in her vicinity. May her memory be blessed.

The topic chosen for this year's Holocaust and Bravery Memorial Day ceremony is that of work in the ghetto. The Labor Office (Arbeitszentrale) was one of the most important institutions in the ghetto's Jewish self-administration and many articles have been written about it. In our archives there is a special album prepared as a gift to Jacob Edelstein, the Jewish Elder, at the first anniversary of Ghetto Theresienstadt, describing the activity of the Labor Office in illustrations by artist Leo Haas (the album was published by Beit Theresienstadt). A fairly detailed description of the different workplaces in the ghetto can be found in a short article published in the current issue, written in 1973 by Rudolf Freiburger, head of the ghetto's Production Department. The article is particularly important as it was written by one who personally experienced the events and took part in them.

**Happy Passover.**

Yours,  
Tami Kinberg  
Director of Beit Theresienstadt

**Happy Passover,  
peace and happiness**



**from all of us,  
Beit Terezin staff**

Willi Groag, Wildflowers 1942-1945



## Launch of the exhibition "Days Beyond Time – Artist Meets Testimony" at Emek Hamaayanot

From September to December the exhibition "Days Beyond Time – Artist Meets Testimony" was on display at the Kimron Hall in Emek Hamaayanot (near Beit Shean), courtesy of the Emek Hamaayanot Regional Council. Talma Segal, one of the survivors who participated in the project, is a member of Kibbutz Nir David. In her testimony, Talma spoke of arriving at the ghetto as a child with a tiny suitcase containing figurines of Snow White and the seven dwarfs. The guard at the ghetto entrance hit the suitcase with his rifle butt and

the fragile figurines fell on the ground and shattered. Artist Izabella Volovnik's artwork created for the exhibition (in the photograph below) centered on this experience. Talma participated in the opening events and at a discourse event. The local audience, some of whom had known her for years, was moved by her story.

Displaying the exhibition in the Kimron Hall has exposed it to the extensive population of northern Israel. ■



The exhibition in Kimron Hall



Talma Segal and Tami Kinberg next to Volovnik's painting

## Annual memorial event and seminar, commemorating the 84<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Kristallnacht

This year the annual memorial event and seminar commemorating Kristallnacht was held at Beit Theresienstadt by the Association of Israelis of Central European Origin, attended by Mr. Nicolaus Lutterotti, the Ambassador of Austria to Israel, Dr. Jörg Walendy, Deputy Ambassador of Germany, and other dignitaries. Ruth Malin, who had been a young girl at the time of the Kristallnacht events, spoke of her torturous experiences.

The main topic of the seminar was the attitude of the Jewish settlement to the rise of the Nazis, Kristallnacht, and

the Holocaust. In her fascinating lecture, Prof. Dina Porat emphasized that the Jewish settlement did not have the capacity to come to the assistance of persecuted European Jewry, but various rescue operations were undertaken nonetheless. The lecture was followed by a very interesting discussion, in which also Prof. Moshe Zimmermann and Muki Tsur participated. Beit Theresienstadt and the Association of Israelis of Central European Origin have a natural long-standing connection. ■



From right to left: Zvi Cohen, survivor of the ghetto, Gerda Steinfeld, survivor of the ghetto, Jörg Walendy, Deputy German Ambassador to Israel, Julia Bräuer, Cultural Attaché of the German Embassy, Yehoshua Shapir from the Association of Israelis of Central European Origin, Ruth Malin, a survivor of the Kristallnacht, Nikolaus Lutterotti, the Austrian ambassador to Israel.



## Conference for the next generations

In December, a conference for the next generations was held, intended for members of the second, third, and fourth generations. This is a tradition we have introduced in the past four years, in the desire to gradually involve and include members of the next generations in our activities. Gilad Seliktar, illustrator and comic artist, spoke about his new book "But I live" and about adapting the memory of the Holocaust through comics in his works and those of various artists.

The comics book "But I live" tells the story of two brothers from the Netherlands, Rolf and Nico Kamp, who were hidden during World War II. Gilad held many conversations and interviews with them and heard their story. In his lecture, he addressed the challenge of presenting a single story from two different perspectives and the choice of how to present the story visually and textually. His lecture corresponded with a topic that occupies us considerably – how to preserve the memory of the Holocaust and pass it on to the next generations. As part of the program, Raz Sonnenfeld's new wall of illustrations "Events from the History of Ghetto Theresienstadt", was inaugurated. ■



Cervenka family



Achim Bagiansky and his granddaughter

## First class of the workshop "Memory for the Future"

January and February saw the beginning of the first cycle of the workshop "Memory for the Future", a collaboration with the Emek Hefer Regional Council and the Zikaron Basalon organization, moderated by Einat Kriger. The purpose of the workshop is to give the participants, members of the second and third generation, tools that will allow them to tell their family's story through individual historical research, gathering information, and putting together the story. As part of the workshop held at Beit Theresienstadt, Liora Cohen Livni, daughter of Max and the late Chava, gave a talk on genealogical research and described the fascinating investigation of her mother's family for many generations back. Nurit Givoni, who adapted the story of her father, the late Hanan Bachrich, and talks about him at schools and to various groups, brought her lecture as an example of how the story of the Holocaust can be conveyed. The workshop had 25 participants. ■





## More events

"Brundibar" performed by the students of Gymnasium Wülfrath from Germany, in the renovated concert hall of Kfar Vitkin



Launching of David Sivor's book  
"The World in which We Live"



"The Israelis and the Holocaust"  
Shahar Sklash



A meeting of Holocaust survivors from the "Amcha" organization with students from "Shafririm" school



Giora Gerzon's film  
"The Olympic Doll", the story of  
Inga Auerbacher



For information on future events, go to our website [www.bterezin.org.il](http://www.bterezin.org.il) or look for us on social networks.



## "Days Beyond Time" in Geneva / Tami Kinberg

Landing in Geneva we were welcomed by the freezing cold, but our excitement kept us warm. We arrived – Yossi Veisid, architect, artist, and curator of the exhibition, Gal and Maya Raveh the creators, and myself – at a nice hotel very close to the gallery where the exhibition "Days Beyond Time – Artists Meet Testimony" was on display. The "D10 Art Space" is an art gallery located in the center of town. The gallery's owner, Victoria Dzodziev, is a Ukrainian Jew who has been living in Geneva for 20 years. At the time the exhibition was being erected, she evacuated her older parents from the Ukraine and brought them to Switzerland.

The exhibition was invited by the Foreign Ministry and the Israeli delegation to the UN in Geneva in preparation for the UN's marking of International Holocaust Memorial Day. The two options were either to display it in the UN facility or in the city itself, which would maximize the number of potential visitors. We were glad that Victoria agreed to show the exhibition at her gallery.

The opening event was moving; the gallery was packed. Among those who attended were the ambassadors of many countries, members of the Jewish community, and residents of Geneva. Amit Kabesa, one of the artists participating in the exhibition, surprised us by coming as well. Kabesa opened the evening and spoke about his encounter with the late Peter Lang, which provided the inspiration for his sculpture "The Look". Other speakers were UN Director-General Tatiana Valovaya, Head of the European Union delegation to the United Nations Lota Knudsen, Head of the Israeli delegation



Groups of students visiting the exhibition



Daniel Shek at the opening of the exhibition in Geneva



Lunch at the residence of the Israeli Ambassador, Permanent Representative to the UN. Meirav Eilon Shahar

to the United Nations Ambassador Meirav Eilon Shahar, and Daniel Shek, Chairman of the Beit Theresienstadt board.

The staff of the Israeli Foreign Office did an excellent job. Articles appeared in the local and national press, in addition to radio interviews and lots of publicity. The Head of the Israeli delegation to the UN institutions in Geneva, Ambassador Meirav Eilon Shahar, invited us for an official lunch at her house, and told us about the work of the Israeli delegation to the UN, which includes many challenges.

The exhibition was on display at the gallery for an entire month and was seen by many visitors, including youth groups who watched the testimonial videos and the exhibition's artwork and then discussed their experiences and feelings as well as their attitude to the memory of the Holocaust.

Bringing the exhibition to Geneva was the height of the poignant journey on which it has taken us. Its next destination is Siegen, Germany. Wherever it is displayed it arouses thought, exposes people to the topic of the Holocaust, and mediates the story to the young generations, who respond with substantial interest. ■

## Torches will be lit by :

### Micha Glass



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

move to the village of Bosonohy.

When Micha was 9 years old, his parents were arrested for engaging in underground activity. Micha relates that at that moment he grew 10 years older in 10 minutes. After his parents were arrested, Micha took his younger brother to the house of the priest who had collaborated with his father in the underground activities. They were hidden in the church. Once the immediate danger had passed, the priest contacted the children's aunt and uncle, who took them in.

About six months later, their mother was released and took charge of the children. They lived in an apartment with several other Jewish families until March 27, 1942 when Micha, his brother and mother were deported to Ghetto Theresienstadt. In the ghetto, Micha was sent to the children's block Q609, while his brother remained with their mother due to his young age. The family remained at Theresienstadt until the ghetto's liberation by the Red Army. At the end of the war, the family returned to Brno and in 1949 they immigrated to Israel. Francesca, who had been a well known photographer in Brno, opened a photography studio in Jerusalem. She passed away in Jerusalem in 1994.

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

### Avraham (Avi) Bassist



**A**vraham was born in Czechoslovakia in 1942 to Yaakov and Stefanka.

At age 3 months, in May 1942, he was deported with his parents to Ghetto Theresienstadt.

Thanks to his parents he managed to survive in the ghetto, and he was liberated in May 1943, aged 3.

After the war he immigrated to Israel and lived in Netanya. Avi was active in the Zevulun Sailing Association and then continued to study at the Marine Officer School in Acre.

Following his service in the Navy he continued to work in commercial shipping, where he held the rank of officer for four years.

In 1970 he completed his studies in the Technion and worked for the ZIM shipping company as a mechanical engineer. Avi built ships and supervised their construction, as well as containers and trailers.

### Ruth Elias



**R**uth Elias was born in 1922 in Ostrava, Czechoslovakia, to Friedrich and Melvina Huppert, the younger sister of Edith. The two sisters received a Zionist education and were members of the Maccabi Hatzair youth movement.

After the occupation of the Czech Republic, in March 1939, Ruth and her sister received a permit to travel to Britain but refused to leave their father, who was ill with tuberculosis.

In October 1939 the family moved to a small village near Brno, where they lived and worked while hiding their Jewish identity. In early April 1942, their identity was exposed, and they were deported to Ghetto Theresienstadt.

About two weeks after their arrival they were summoned for a transport eastward together with their father. Ruth, who was sick and unfit to leave for the east, married in the ghetto, remained there, and her life was saved, while her father and sister were murdered in the Lublin region.

At Theresienstadt Ruth volunteered to serve as a nurse at the hospital for chronically ill patients and later on worked in the kitchen, which helped her handle the extreme hunger and allowed her to sing and to connect with the music that had accompanied her from childhood. Ruth also participated in the choir organized by conductor Rafael Schechter.

In December 1943 Ruth was deported eastwards to the "family camp" at Auschwitz-Birkenau and from there to other camps, of which the last was Taucha, a subcamp of Buchenwald. At Taucha she met Kurt Elias, and the two were liberated there on April 18, 1945, Kurt's birthday.

After several weeks during which they voluntarily remained at the camp and cared for the sick, the two moved to Prague, where Ruth worked as a secretary while Kurt completed his pharmacology studies. They married on April 18, 1948, and about a year later immigrated to Israel.

They settled in the town of Beit Yitzhak in Emek Hefer, and put all their energy into starting a home and family, in an attempt to repress the past. They had two sons: Rafi and Gabi, 9 grandchildren, and 15 great-grandchildren.

In 1998 Ruth's book "Triumph of Hope" was published, and she subsequently began giving talks in Israel and Germany. Ruth passed away in 2008. The torch will be lit by her sons. ■

Avi is married and has 3 daughters and 7 grandchildren. He is retired and enjoys his family and engaging in the many hobbies he developed throughout his life. ■



## Torches will be lit by:

### Yoel (Peter) Miller



**Y**oel (Peter) Miller was born in 1937 in Prague, Czechoslovakia, the eldest son of Rosa and Hanush.

In December 1941 he was deported to Ghetto Theresienstadt together with his mother, about ten days after his father was taken there as well.

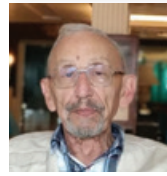
In the ghetto, he lived with his mother in the women's barracks. Yoel's mother worked as a seamstress and took advantage of the fact that she left the ghetto for work every day in order to smuggle out letters.

In early 1944, in her first months of pregnancy, Yoel's mother was caught and imprisoned in the Small Fortress, near the ghetto. Other women who were living with Yoel and his mother in the women's quarters cared for Yoel during her long months of incarceration.

In September 1944 Yoel's younger brother Gershon was born, and the baby, and mother were miraculously returned to the ghetto. A baby gown that the women sewed for him is preserved in the Beit Terezin archive. Four days after Yoel's mother gave birth, his father was deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where he was murdered.

The mother and two sons were liberated in May 1945 and returned to their apartment in Prague. In early 1949 they immigrated to Israel. Yoel served in the Israeli army and then studied aeronautical engineering in London. Later on, he worked as an aircraft engineer in the Israel Aerospace Industries. Yoel is married to Marianne and they have four children and eleven grandchildren. ■

### Professor Shlomo Breznitz



**P**rofessor Shlomo Breznitz was born in 1936 in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, to Yosef and Yenka, brother to Yehudit, four years his senior.

In 1942 Shlomo, his sister and mother, like many Bratislava Jews, were sent to a transit camp in the town of Žilina, a stop on the way to Auschwitz. Due to the father's vital job as chief engineer in the electric company, the family was released about a month later and continued to reside in the town.

In light of the wartime developments and in the desire to be prepared for the future, in 1943 Shlomo's parents decided to convert their children to Christianity, and in September 1944, when it became clear that they would be deported, Shlomo and Yehudit were placed in an orphanage within a monastery and took their leave of their parents, who were sent to Auschwitz the next day.

Their father was murdered and their mother, who survived, returned after the war, and collected the children from the orphanage. In 1949, at age 13, Shlomo immigrated to Israel through Aliyat Hanoar and reached Kibbutz Deganya Bet. Later on, he moved to Jerusalem, where he graduated from high school. He completed his military service in the Givati Brigade and in the Air Force intelligence, and studied psychology at the Hebrew University, where he proceeded to earn a Ph.D.

His research focuses on human behavior in stressful situations, and he is among the founders of the Center for Study of Psychological Stress at Haifa University and the founder of the CogniFit software company that develops programs for training the mind and improving cognitive skills.

From 2006-2007 he served as a Member of the Knesset on behalf of the Kadimah list.

Prof. Breznitz described his autobiographical story in his book "Memory Fields".

Shlomo Breznitz currently lives in Haifa. He was married to the late Prof. Zvia Breznitz. He is currently married to Rachel, and has three children, and seven grandchildren. ■

### Hanna Vera Greenwald



**H**anna was born in July 1938 in a village near the town of Hlohovec, Czechoslovakia, to Margita and Alexander Reitman. Her family practiced Jewish traditions but was also an integral part of the local population. Her father ran an agricultural farm and received a permit

for being "vital for the country's economy", whereupon the family was saved from deportation to the death camps in 1942. Most of their extended family were deported to Auschwitz, never to return.

In the summer of 1944 the permit expired, and the family

was forced to flee and seek hiding. The father was caught by local collaborators, sent to Auschwitz, and from there to the death marches to Mauthausen, where he perished. The mother contacted an acquaintance who hid them in a large pile of straw in a field, where they spent the winter until the arrival of the Red Army in April 1945.

In 1949, after six months in France, Hanna reached Kibbutz Gan Shmuel through Aliyat Hanoar and joined the kibbutz educational institution. Hanna, who is now living in Haifa, married Max Greenwald, and they have three children, ten grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. ■

## Visits and seminars

Every year, right after the festivals in the month of Tishrei, diverse groups of visitors come to Beit Theresienstadt. This year too, nearly every day, schoolchildren came for seminars and guided tours. Many high school students visited the museum as part of their journey throughout the country on the topic of Holocaust remembrance in Israeli society. In addition, groups of teachers from all over the world attended the museum as well. In October 2022, teachers from the Berlin Department of Education and Czech teachers visited the museum and met the late Ruth Meisner, a survivor of the ghetto. In January 2023, teachers and teacher instructors from various South American countries came to the museum.

In February, a group of adults from Japan came and were very moved by the guided tour and the story of the ghetto. The group's visit was initiated by Michiko Nomura, now a retired teacher, who began teaching about the Holocaust in Japan in the 1980s, and initiated the display of exhibitions and activities on the topic of the children of Theresienstadt.

Two special seminars were held in recent months as part of the preparations for the journey to Poland. The first was for Maccabi Hatzair youth movement members who volunteer for a year after graduating high school. During the preparatory day, they met the late Ruth Meisner, who had been a member of the movement in her youth. Also, a group of young people from Kfar Tavor came as part of their preparation for Poland, some of whom had family stories interwoven with that of the ghetto. ■



Maccabi Hatzair group with the late Ruth Meisner (in the middle)



A group of teachers from Berlin, Germany



A group of teachers from the Czech Republic with the late Ruth Meisner



Students in "Israeli Journey" listen to the testimony of Zvi Cohen

## Educational activity "Days Beyond Time – Artist Meets Testimony" – the Kimron Hall, Emek Hamaayanot

Over the two months (October–December 2022) when the exhibition "Days Beyond Time – Artist Meets Testimony" was on display at the Kimron Hall in Emek Hamaayanot, hundreds of teenagers from different parts of the country visited it. These included students from Emek Hamaayanot and the region, as well as students from different schools who viewed the exhibition as part of the "Journey to the Human Spirit". While at the exhibition, the students saw the testimonies portrayed and held a deep and



moving discourse on the memory of the Holocaust and Israeli society, as well as on their role in conveying the memory to the next generations. ■



## Manufacturing operations at Ghetto Theresienstadt / Rudolf Freiberger

**T**his article appeared in the collection "Studien und Dokumente" from 1998. The author, Eng. Dr. Freiberger (1906–1978), was part of the ghetto's original "construction detail". He arrived on a transport in December 1941 and remained in the ghetto until its liberation. At Theresienstadt, he managed the Production Department and was a member of the ghetto's Jewish Council. He wrote the article in 1973. (edited and abridged article)

The Production Department was comprised of two groups. One group engaged in manufacturing for internal purposes in the ghetto and the second for external use (part for private entrepreneurs and part for military-industrial operations in Nazi Germany). The workplaces included: a bakery, a laundry, shoemaking and clothes mending, potato drying, manufacturing soap substitutes, manufacturing orthopedic accessories, optics and eyeglasses, a clock fixing workshop, a clothes industry, artisanship, manufacturing sewing accessories, manufacturing cardboard boxes, manufacturing wooden soles, manufacturing packing crates, a workshop for mending uniforms, mica splitting and mica tempering.

At its height, the Production Department employed about 4,000 workers.

Economic life at Ghetto Theresienstadt included a salary method that seemingly involved payment in return for work, but this had no practical meaning. Even when ghetto money was introduced, it was worth almost nothing. Most of the "wages" were transferred to a "savings account" and officially recorded in the books of the Jewish self-administration's bank. It can be assumed that the German command had little interest in the amounts paid for work that provided internal needs of the ghetto; however, it had considerable interest in the wages that constituted a basis for calculating the costs and profitability of products manufactured for external use. The latter were determined by the "service office".

When determining the wages paid for work to provide the ghetto's internal needs, the Jewish self-administration was split: The radical view was that although the wages were only recorded and not paid, after the victory over Nazi Germany these records would constitute the basis of demands for compensation, and therefore a relatively high pay level should be set. Others claimed, on the contrary, that the "service office" could demand higher labor output in return for high pay, such that low pay levels should be maintained.

Ultimately, a compromise was reached: for those working in the bakery and laundry, as well as the points of delivery for their products, an hourly wage of 4.80 and 4.40 ghetto kronen (GK) was set, and for the carpentry 4.75 GK. The pay for assembling wooden structures was set at 7.7 GK. In contrast, the "service office" set hourly wages of 2.90 GK for the mica splitting factory.

The cost of manufacturing one kilogram of bread was 83 heller. Bakers outside the ghetto were paid on the same basis (without materials) 80 heller. Due to the competitive capacity of the ghetto bakery, the self-administration argued for the existence of this enterprise, among other things as a means of protecting the many people employed in the bakery from

deportation eastwards. The bread baked in this bakery was of better quality than that provided by private bakeries outside the ghetto.

When determining the costs, labor was a most significant element. The labor needed was the basis for calculating the number of workers (and indirectly also a means of protecting a certain number of workers from deportation). When similar data existed from factories outside the ghetto, attempts were made to calculate the labor cost of manufacturing at Theresienstadt as about 100% higher, taking into consideration the technical state of the equipment, the quality of the materials, and the inferior professional training of the workers (usually people from other occupations and trainees). Also, the workers' health condition and nutrition were taken into account.

Another serious problem was the length of the workday. At a certain stage, the camp command set a workday of 10 hours. In workplaces with two shifts approval was sometimes given for 8-hour workdays, even when tempering mica brought from Prague to Theresienstadt, despite the 10-hour workday in Prague. The justifications cited included the curfew. Another achievement of factories that worked in shifts was the supply of noon and evening meals in heat-preserving utensils, following the rationale that food could not be issued after shift hours. The food was provided by the Provisions Department. Meal breaks were counted as part of the work hours.

Even more difficult was the issue of time off from work. The camp command maintained a 7-day work week. Even before this order, the head of the Production Department had suggested that the self-administration set flexible work times (where each department would give a day off to one seventh of the workers on each day of the week), in the concern that a 7-day week would be introduced at some future point. This act made it possible to give workers a day off even after the 7-day work week was introduced.

### Factories for internal needs of the ghetto

**Metalworking workshops** – These were located in the construction yard of the former large fortress and primarily involved metalwork for purposes of construction and machinery (machinery maintenance, manufacturing spare parts, work tools, etc.). There was also a workshop for repairing automobiles.

**Woodwork plants** – The room carpenters had a small workshop. There was a relatively large carpentry at the former riding school, where tens of thousands of double- and triple-

decker beds were manufactured, as well as tables, chairs, and stools for the youth dorms, the hospital, the factories, etc. The carpentry's wood storehouse was near the riding school. One day the manager of the storehouse found (apparently when counting the inventory) that about 60 square meters of wood were missing. He notified the head of the Production Department who consulted with his superior, the head of the Economics Department. The damage was so considerable that it could not be recorded as a "loss" without the knowledge of the "service office". In the same way, the head of the Economics Department could not ask the "service office" to write off such a quantity. The only option was to keep it secret and erase small quantities from the carpentry's record over time. This continued for a while, with the constant risk that the command would discover the shortage and its misreport. At this time the notorious Robert Mandler was in charge of monitoring economics. He found out about the shortage and reported it in writing to the head of manufacturing. There was a concern that Mandler would report to the camp command. The head of production decided on the only viable course of action – he denied Mandler's contention, explaining that Mandler's colleagues had misestimated the quantity of wood necessary for the products manufactured and used for those in storage that had not yet been delivered. In the presence of the head of the ghetto administration at the time, Dr. Eppstein, a heated argument with Mandler took place. The head of production accused him of amateur monitoring of economics. Mandler, who seems to have lost his confidence, was afraid of being shamed and waived any additional investigations.

**Assembling wooden structures** – The building components manufactured by the carpentry or brought from outside the ghetto were assembled in this workshop, which also manufactured shelves for the various production sites.

**The bakery** – was originally built for a garrison. Hence, its capacity proved insufficient and there was need for additional machines and an oven. Although there were only a few professionals who guided and taught the workers, 16,000 kilograms of bread were produced every day. At the height of the ghetto's capacity, 276 g. of bread per person were baked every day. One of the gravest problems of the bakery was to minimize the loss of material. A chemistry laboratory was charged with systematically checking the production and comparing the quantity of flour that arrived at the bakery with the flour consumption.

**The laundry** – In the past it served the garrison stationed in the city; in the ghetto it was vital for maintaining hygiene. The laundry had good technical equipment but its capacity was insufficient for the ghetto (about 23,000 kg. of laundry per month). Additional equipment was designed independently in the ghetto and some was even manufactured (two drying rooms, an ironing room), increasing the capacity to 90,000 kg. of laundry per month. When the ghetto's population was at its height the laundry was capable of handling 1.92 kg.

of laundry per person a month. The laundry's location was outside the ghetto limits and the shift workers walked back and forth to work, accompanied by gendarmes.

**Workshop for mending shoes and clothing** – These workshops employed 800 workers. The mending was extended at a later stage to the manufacture of clothing and shoes from old materials. Bandaging materials for the ghetto hospitals were briefly manufactured as well.

**Distribution points** – Dirty laundry, as well as clothing and shoes to be mended, were brought to the distribution points, and clean laundry and mended objects were returned there. The Production Department issued vouchers for this service at a quota set by the heads of the different departments in the ghetto.

**Potato dryer** – Manufactured in early 1945 following the shortage in proper storage space for potatoes. Indeed, steps were taken to prevent the stored potatoes from rotting and inspections were held, but these were insufficient. By establishing the drying facility about 20-30 tons of potatoes were kept from rotting. The dried potatoes were intended for use in the ghetto, beyond the regular quantities distributed. Permission was also received to use them to produce potato flour in order to maintain the special allocation of bread for forced laborers even when there were considerable difficulties with the supply.

**Manufacturing soap substitutes** – This manufacturing process was carried out in a small workshop managed by a specially skilled chemist. In times of severe soap shortages this was a valued product.

**Manufacture of optical aids and bandages, eyeglasses, and a workshop for fixing clocks** – These small workshops were located in former shops and were extremely useful for the ghetto's inmates.

## Manufacturing for clients outside the ghetto

In late 1941 or early 1942 the German commandant of the camp ordered that a large plant be established for manufacturing ready-made clothing. A large quantity of sewing machines were brought to Theresienstadt. The plant was established on one of the floors of the Sudeten barracks and Adolf Eichmann participated in an external surveillance tour of the plant. However, a short while later it was abandoned.

**Manufacturing crafted objects, sewing accessories, and cardboard boxes** – The manufacturing of these commodities was based on raw materials and machines owned by private companies. The personnel in the camp command and their superiors in the Office for Jewish Emigration in Prague had a financial stake in this, because the German entrepreneur for whom the workshop operated was a woman of Jewish descent and it provided employment for her kin. The materials were brought by truck, which was also used to smuggle letters, food packages, and smoking materials. Fights appeared to have broken out among the SS men due to corruption, and quite a while later some of the workshops were dismantled



and the activity of others was curtailed.

**Manufacturing cardboard boxes** also served the internal needs of the ghetto, where cardboard boxes for storing the ashes of the deceased were produced.

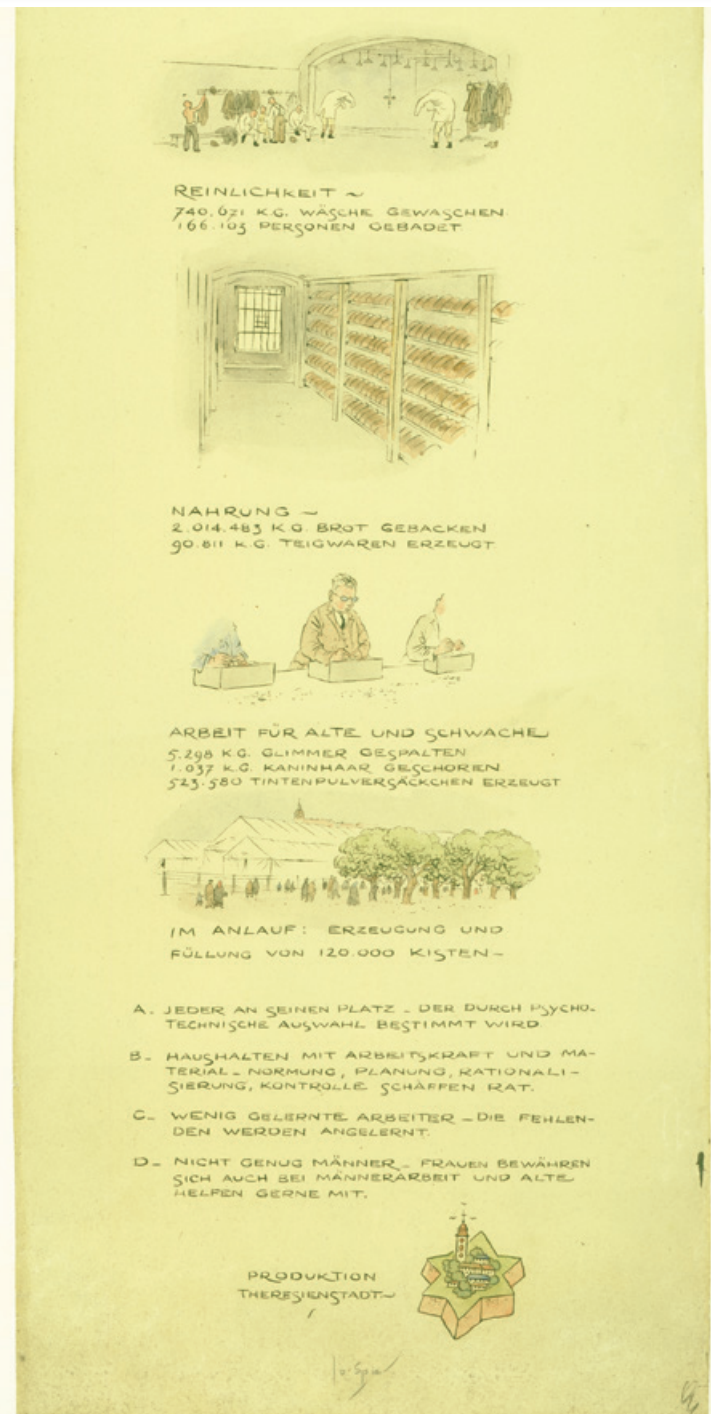
**Manufacturing wooden soles** – The manufacturing of wooden soles took place in a small section of the riding school, which was mostly occupied by the carpentry. The wooden soles were manufactured automatically and they may have been intended for prisoner camps. These operations were on a small scope.

**Manufacturing crates** – The manufacturing of crates was known as Production "K". The crates were intended for storing work tools used to fix trucks for the German military administration. The order was for 120,000 crates. Establishment of the plant and the work process were supervised by a representative of the military administration named Neuman, who held the rank of first lieutenant or captain. In his presence, SS-Hauptsturmführer Seidl, at the time the camp's commandant, gave the order to establish Production "K" in late April 1943. The date given by Seidl for planning the project of deploying circus tents in Theresienstadt's central square for the manufacture and preparation of the equipment was May 1, 1943. The project included a crate storehouse, a materials storehouse, a shipment storehouse, and a conveyor belt. The setup process was to have been concluded by May 18, 1943. Neuman set a quota of 2,000 crates per day, such that the order would be ready by July 29, 1943. Seidl added to the order by threatening the head of the Economics Department, Karl Schliesser, that he would set fire to the ghetto and hang him at the slightest suspicion of sabotage. Neuman recruited engineers, foremen, and office workers and demanded daily reports of the materials inventory and output.

Production "K" aroused much interest in the higher echelons of the German army, as evident in many visits by high ranking officers, including one general. Nonetheless, it became clear that the military administration was unable to ensure regular supply of the materials intended for packaging and there were frequent breaks in production in the Packaging Department, whereby the order was postponed to July 20, 1943. Work continued until September of that year. Due to the shortage of materials the pace of the packaging diminished, such that the original 10-hour workday was reduced to eight hours or even less.

This situation was known to both Seidl and Neuman. Since they had a stake in keeping it concealed from the superior institutions, they agreed to a row of steps that were at times grotesque: slowing down the production line, reducing the work hours, keeping a "constant inventory" of materials that allowed the pretension of regular production during inspections (for one or two hours). When these steps proved insufficient, crates that had already been packed were emptied so that the packaging line could be shown to be operating at full pace when inspected.

Neuman tried to give advance notice of any inspections. A guard was placed on the roof of the tent to warn of approaching



Jo Spier - The production department in Theresienstadt

visitors, and then the production line was operated as though regularly. Inspections were very superficial. The transports from Theresienstadt were interrupted for several months to accommodate Production "K", although there was no actual coordination. This may have been occasioned by disagreements within the Nazi leadership. It may have also been caused by disputes between the SS and the army regarding delays in the delivery of materials to the Packaging Department. Packaging began in May and ceased in November. The Warsaw ghetto uprising took place that year, from April to August. The dispute between the army with its interest in Production "K" and the SS with its concern of resistance in Theresienstadt, may have been the reason that deportations were put on hold until September 1943<sup>1</sup>.

**Workshop for mending uniforms** – The client was the quartermaster's office in Munich and the mended uniforms were sent by train to Munich, but the shipments were irregular. For a certain length of time the uniforms were sprayed white in the workshop. In 1944 the client sent a written complaint to the "service office" that the shipment had arrived in a very bad state; blades and bottle shards had been found among the uniforms and several soldiers had been injured while unpacking them. The complaint mentioned sabotage. The head of the Economics Department was immediately ordered to clarify the matter and to submit a report by the next day. He charged the head of production with the investigation and that same night a report was prepared, with the collaboration of several workers from the workshop. It stated that there were no blades or bottles at the workshop. None of those present had any suspicions, with the exception of one worker who attested that blades were used regularly to open stiches. The production manager dropped this testimony and did not record it.

**Manufacturing mica** – The "service office" seems to have received the order for mica splitting for the Reich office of electro-technical products (RETE) in the spring of 1944. The raw materials were brought from Berlin and then from Hamburg, where the material that arrived in the ghetto was tempered, sent back, and returned as raw material for splitting. Thus, the company profited twice and it is to be assumed that the management of this business was in the interest of influential people in the Nazi system. In early July 1944 Karl Rahm gave the order to begin splitting the mica on the 1st of the month

in southern barracks 1 and 3, using a team of 800 women. The work was to have been carried out in three shifts. He ordered that a list of the necessary equipment and materials be submitted to him. The list included equipment to be ordered from outside, such as razor blades and plates for splitting the mica, strainers, scales, etc. The first train car with raw materials for processing only arrived on September 5, 1944, namely at a delay of more than two months. RETE publicized the price of the raw material, the predicted revenues, and the price of the product. The workers' wages were determined according at the instruction of SS-Sturmbannführer Hans Günther, Head of the Central Office for Jewish Emigration in Prague, guided by the principle that the production expenses should be covered by the revenues. The Jewish manager assumed that the quality of the raw materials would not ensure the required output and there was a concern that penalties would be imposed. Therefore, the data from lab tests were saved, recording the quality of the raw materials that arrived. As early as September 14 a complaint was submitted regarding the quality of the shipment, with a suggestion that RETE change its price. Similar complaints were submitted on seven other occasions. Following the complaints, RETE held an inspection of the site and its findings recognized those of the office for inspection of raw materials.

The work hours devoted to mica splitting posed a considerable problem. The Production Department suggested changing the number of work shifts to two, since splitting requires daylight. Artificial light strains the eyes and this would lead to reduced output. When the factory began its operation, a request for one 8-hour shift including a 20-minute break was submitted on September 19. The request was complied with, perhaps because the "service office" too had doubts about whether the raw materials would arrive regularly. On September 23 an inspection was held, attended by Hans Günther, Pfeifer, and Rittershausen. Günther demanded that the required work output be achieved in one month. On October 23, 1944, the average output was supposed to have been 20.6 g. per hour, but in practice it was 5 g. This target was in fact never achieved. The highest output was 16.1 g. per hour, in March 1945. The rate of production increased gradually, while the managers in the ghetto concealed the low output and delayed delivery of the final products as much as possible. Nevertheless, no sanctions were imposed by the "service office". ■

1. Editor's note: In fact, the reason for the suspension of the departing transports was completely different. On February 1943, Heinrich Müller's personal representative sent a telegram to the Chief of the Reich Security Main Office, Ernst Kaltenbrunner: "The SS commandant is not interested in the deportation of Jews from Theresienstadt, as this will refute the claim that Jews can live and die in the ghetto for the elderly".



## Story of a teddy bear / Dr. Tereza Maizels

In October 2022, Ruti Bobek, a survivor of Ghetto Theresienstadt who had volunteered at Beit Theresienstadt for many years, presented a teddy bear wearing a buttoned shirt, her dear friend, to the Beit Theresienstadt archives.

The teddy bear, whom Ruti had named Patya, had been given her as a gift by her aunt Emilka – Emilia Koerner née Margolius – who had worked in an administrative position under the management of Emanuel Spitz at a textile and lace factory owned by Ernst Mautner in Prague. The Spitz family had two sons (Walter and Egon, who both survived the war) who had everything they wished for, including stuffed animals and games. The teddy was headed for the garbage dump, once the children had had their fill of playing with it. But Emilia intervened and asked to take it home to her young niece. The teddy, which was still in almost new shape, became Ruti's best friend and stayed with her from that time on (about 1937) until it was handed over to the Beit Theresienstadt collection.

One of Ruti's first memories of the teddy is of shaving the mustache around its nose, fully believing it would grow back. "Children's nonsense", says Ruti.

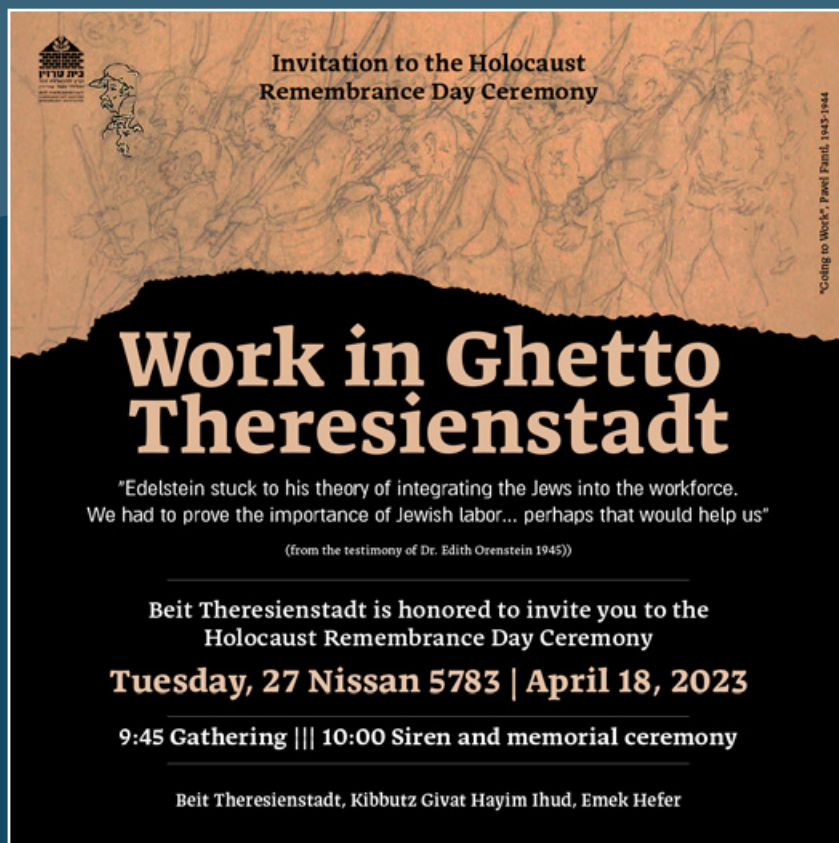
When the Bobek family was summoned for deportation to Theresienstadt (transport no. AAV, 30.7.1942), Ruti did not forget to take the teddy with her. Arriving at the ghetto, she managed to get through the admission process without losing it and then kept it in her room, even when she went to nursery school. After liberation, she took it back with her to her grandmother's home in the country and later to the home of her maternal uncle in Litomerice. In April 1949, the family immigrated to Israel; Ruti dressed the teddy in a buttoned shirt so that it would not be cold on the way and also to protect it from Israel's strong sun. ■



## "Ghetto Theresienstadt on a Timeline"



The idea of forming a connection with young artists capable of contributing an updated point of view has been on our mind for a long time. In the exhibition "Dancing on the Edge of a Volcano" we included a short animated film about the Artists' Affair, created by young artist Nitzan Weiner. This time we approached the animator Raz Sonnenfeld, a Bezalel graduate, to create a type of illustrated timeline of major events in Ghetto Theresienstadt. The result is ten illustrations that provide a chronological portrayal of historical scenes, from the German occupation of Prague in March 1942 to the liberation of the ghetto in May 1945. The illustrations are displayed on an external wall at Beit Theresienstadt, accompanied by explanations. A QR code allows visitors to receive additional information on each event. The wall was inaugurated at a conference of the next generations held at Beit Theresienstadt this past December. ■



## Beit Theresienstadt produced two new educational kits (in Hebrew and English) intended for guides and teachers:

**"Whole fragments"** – A kit intended for high school students, focusing on remembrance of the Holocaust and Israeli society. The kit is based on the writings of Holocaust survivor, journalist, author, and translator Ruth Bondy, and includes contemporary Israeli artwork and artwork from the ghetto taken from the Beit Theresienstadt archives.



**"And the boy dreamt of a different world"** – A kit intended for elementary and junior high school students. The kit focuses on the world of the children in Ghetto Theresienstadt and is based on artwork produced by children in the ghetto. During the month of April, the kits will be available for purchase at a discounted price of ILS 140 per kit or ILS 260 for the two kits.



For additional information please call 04-6369515



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Beit Theresienstadt, Theresienstadt Martyrs Remembrance Association (R.A.)

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