TEREZÍN



TEREZÍN 1941–1945





TEREZÍN

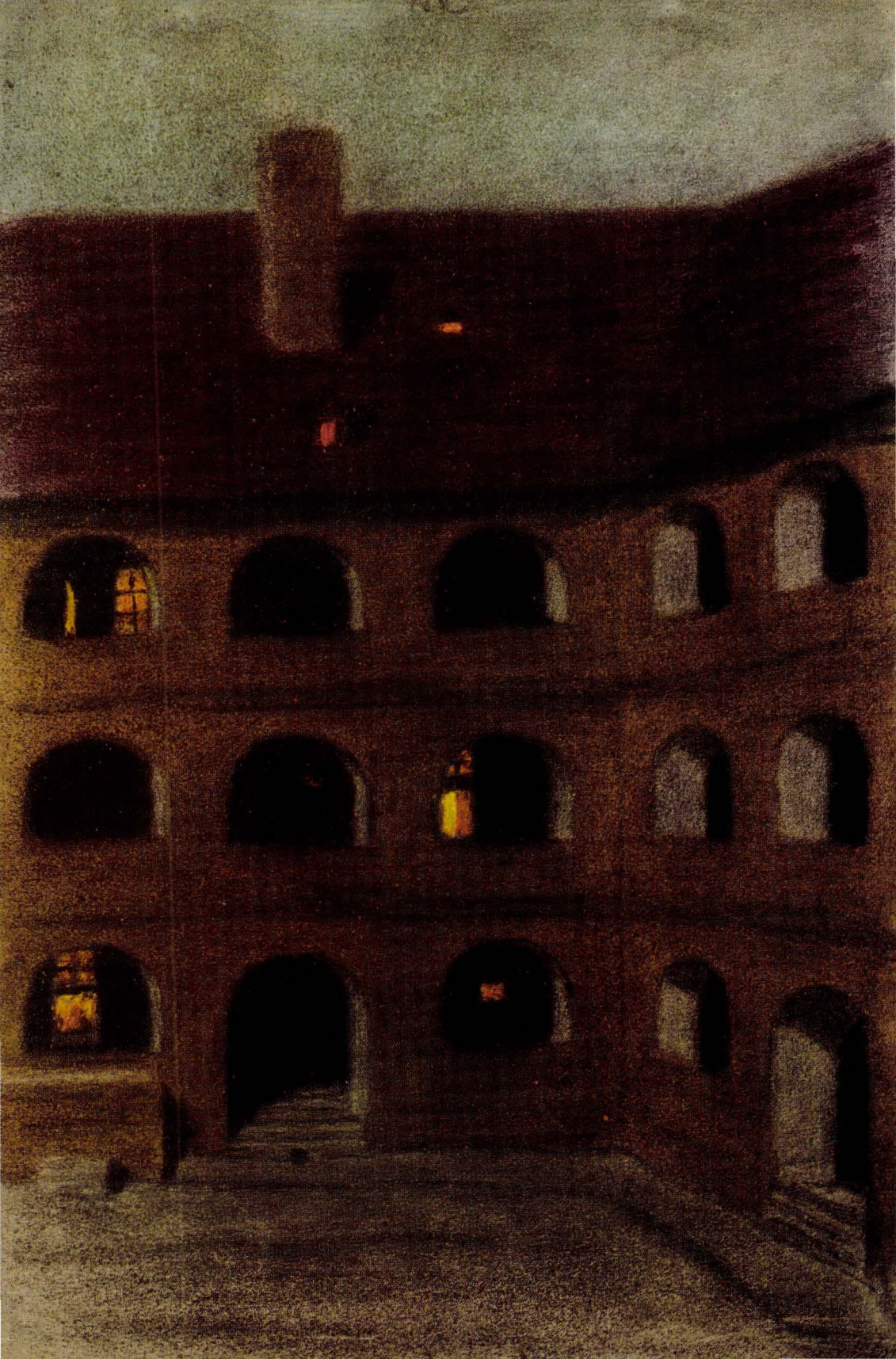
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TEREZÍN



TEREZÍN — *Theresienstadt — Theresienbad — Reichsaltersheim — Judenghetto — Paradiesghetto — Heimeinkaufsverträge — Jüdisches Siedlungsgebiet — Jüdische Selbstverwaltung . . . (Terezín, Theresienstadt — Spa Terezín — Reichs-old-age-home — Jewish ghetto — Ghetto Paradise — Buy your own homes — District for Jewish Settlement — Jewish Self-Administration).*

However far back we delve into the history of mankind, it is unlikely that we should discover an instance of "word-jugglery" that is anything equal to what existed in the dark and terrible period of Nazism. Lies, deceit, camouflage, swindle, falsehood, ruse; these were the slogans under which the concentration camp of Terezín was established in November 1941. The "Führer" gave the Jews from what was then called the "Protektorat" a whole town where it was said they would be able—working hard but in peace—to await the end of the war.

Shortly after Heydrich came to power in Prague, on September 28, 1941, and had proclaimed martial law, the fateful meeting at which he, Frank, Eichmann, Günther, von Wolfram and some other high-ranking members of the SS, SD and the Gestapo were present, definitely decided the fate of the Czech and Moravian Jews.

It was decided to establish a collection camp for them—a transit ghetto—in the old fortified town of Terezín. Simultaneously the decision was made that, after their evacuation from the town and extermination, the place should be turned into a model German settlement. "The final solution of the Jewish problem," in regard to the Jews from Bohemia and Moravia, had thus been decided with all its consequences a month prior to the tragic conference at Wannsee on January 20, 1942, when the verdict was passed to exterminate all Jews on Nazi-controlled European territory.

About 76,000 Jews from 151 Jewish communities in Bohemia and Moravia that the Nazis had dissolved, old and young, men and women, thousands of innocent children, were forcefully penned together in the living quarters of the small garrison town, offering just about sufficient accommodation for a population of 7,000 including the military garrison. In the course of time another 42,000 prisoners from Germany, more than 15,000 from Austria, over 1,100 from Hungary, about 4,900 from Holland and 466 from Denmark were added. What the daily regime must have been like for the prisoners may perhaps best be judged from hard documentary facts: even though Terezín was "only" a transit station on the way to the terrible extermination camps of the East, 33,430 prisoners died there from maltreatment and disease, i. e., almost a quarter of all that had been sent there. Out of that number over 15,000 died from exhaustion and starvation.

Although there were no gas chambers in Terezín, although no "Einsatzkommandos" perpetrated mass executions (sixteen persons were executed by hanging, following negligible accusations, as early as January and February 1942), the Nazis' efforts to destroy the prisoners mentally and physically were constant and systematic. Driven by force into cattle cars nearly 87,000 prisoners left the "ghetto paradise" in transports going East. Not quite 3,100 of them from Bohemia and Moravia survived the terrors of the death factories there. The transports included also 15,000 children, of whom less than 150 returned.

It was at this time that Goebbels' propaganda machine—in an effort to distract world attention from the SS-men's unparalleled cruelty—trumpeted with great fanfare to the world:

"Während in Theresienstadt Juden bei Kaffee und Kuchen sitzen und tanzen, tragen unsere Landser alle Lasten eines furchtbaren Krieges, Not und Entbehrungen, um die Heimat zu

verteidigen." (While the Jews in Terezín are sitting in the café, drinking coffee, eating cake, and dancing, our soldiers have to bear all the burdens of a terrible war, its miseries and deprivations, to defend their motherland.)

The forced concentration of tens of thousands of prisoners in the small area of Terezín brought about the meeting—under entirely abnormal conditions—of a vast number of outstanding Jewish intellectuals from Bohemia, Moravia, Germany, Austria and other countries, who were to create that specific something in the Terezín atmosphere, expressing itself, despite all the brutal measures inflicted by the Nazi oppressors, in unflinching mental courage.

For the tens of thousands of tortured and killed that passed through the concentration camp of Terezín, the Council of Jewish Religious Communities has set up near the former Terezín crematorium a dignified memorial of marble and granite, to which we make pilgrimage every year before the High Holidays, to commemorate those whose ashes the Nazis strewed to the four corners of the earth. To create a lasting memorial to our heroic brothers and sisters who did not succumb morally despite the hard oppression and inexpressible misery to which they were exposed, who despite all their hangmen's efforts, from the very first moment of the establishment of this strangest of all concentration camps, spared no effort to keep alive in the deepest darkness of the mass prison the flame of the spirit of humanity and mankind, who under the most difficult conditions created a mass basis for cultural life, to show at least a small part of what they achieved in face of constant prohibitions and the most cruel reprisals, what they managed to do in the interest of mental resistance, although their bodies were weak, in the field of culture, education, hygiene, music, theatre, plastic arts, this is the mission of this book. Its publication has been made possible by the financial aid of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany in New York, and for this we wish to express our sincere thanks. Even though we do not agree with and categorically reject the idea that it would be possible to atone for the crimes committed by the Nazis through material compensation, we are nevertheless fully convinced that the means allotted for the publication of this book will fulfil the purpose of showing our justified pride in those who did not live to see this day, those who fell under the Nazis' hands, and to support and fortify those who in their fight against all remnants of Nazism and neo-Nazism fight to prevent a repetition of such cruelty of racialism and genocide. This volume is being issued on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the liberation of the Terezín concentration camp by the Soviet army. We should further like to dedicate this book in expression of our love and respect for an outstanding personality and one of the co-authors, our Chief Rabbi Dr. Richard Feder who, after several years of internment in Terezín where he lost his wife, and whence all his relations, including his children and grandchildren, were sent East—ad mea veesrim shono—will celebrate his 90th birthday this year, in the full possession of his physical and mental faculties.

We should further like to dedicate this book to all those heroes—many of them nameless—who, under conditions nobody can fully visualize without experiencing them on his own back, inspired and protected the highest gifts of humanity and the human spirit, thus putting up an effective resistance against their torturers. We dedicate this book to all those who—fully confident in the final victory of humanity over Nazism which the entire Czech nation experienced right up to the last days of the terrible Second World War—morally supported their fellow-sufferers whom the Nazis had predetermined for total physical extermination.

May their memory live on in these pages. May this book become another "hagadah" in the history of our tragic fate. How slanderous it is to say of them that they went to their destruction in masses, without resisting, like sheep to their slaughter. But it is hardly surprising that the

Nazi regime, built up as it was on lies, deceit and delusion—managed to misuse for its own base purposes its prisoners' invincible instinct for culture that they had inherited from many generations of their forbears. It will remain the greatest blot on the history of this century that the Nazis played a terrible farce with the "model Jewish settlement" for which they passed off the Terezín concentration camp to deceive world public attention and to detract attention from the more and more frequently penetrating reports on the bestialities they were committing on their Jewish victims in mass extermination. And the world, unfortunately, wanted to be deceived. With faked situations the prisoners were forced to play for the shooting of the propaganda film on the "comfortable" life of the Jews imprisoned in Terezín, the Nazis fooled their own citizens, and the gigantic and very expensive "Verschönerungsaktion" was prepared by them in Terezín, after the lost battle of Stalingrad, for the visit of representatives from the International Red Cross. They presented to the delegates a wonderfully clean and decked out little town (at least in those streets and parts, where the commission passed). Well-known personalities of cultural life, with the participation of numerous fellow-workers and a sufficient number of supers were forced to put on a show, to produce Verdi's Requiem and the opera "Brundibar" and to give promenade concerts in the luxuriously furnished café. World-famous Jewish personalities were forced at certain times to sit in pleasant "conversation" at the Community House and the hurriedly decorated "children's homes" feigned special care for the children and babies on the part of their warders. The problem of whether the visitors from abroad, from another world, a world of peace and quiet, did or did not want to see through this sham world specially created for them to present a non-existent prisoners' life, whether they were satisfied with this deceitful farce, will probably never be solved.

And thus, twenty years ago, following the liberation of May 9, 1945, only a negligible fraction of the members of our Jewish communities returned to a new life. And this is why it is absolutely unthinkable for us, on the eve of the twentieth anniversary of the liberation of the Terezín concentration camp, to accept the decision of the law-givers of the German Federal Republic, that the crimes committed by the Nazis should be declared lapsed. We join all decent people in the world in protest against this intention. The demand for a just punishment of the Nazi crimes arises only out of an uncompromising demand for justice.

We want this book to honour the undying memory of all those who did not survive. We want to honour the memory of the Jewish mothers who, when given the choice of saving their own lives by handing their children over to death, preferred to share their fate. We want to honour the memory of the prisoners of the Czech family camp B II b Birkenau who, when the Nazis drove them to the gas chambers, went to their death with the words of the Czech national anthem "Kde domov můj" on their lips. We should also like this book to be a contribution to all those efforts towards ensuring the victory of humanity and mankind in the world.

FRANTIŠEK EHRMANN
Chairman of the Council of Jewish
Communities in the Czech Lands

May 1945

BY DAGMAR HILAROVÁ

It was May
And all the blossoms opened up for him.
Blue lilac leaves
gave out their scent.

Heavily he paced across the land.
And everyone could touch the freedom
as a blind man touches
the face of someone
who is dear to him.

It was May.
The branches put out their flags
of blossoms.
Drunken bees rushed to their hives.
The bitter years had passed.
The breeze of spring
whiffed away the last pain
from the heart.
It was May
and everything opened up to freedom.

CHAPTER I

HISTORY AND DATA

OVERTURE / Karel Lagus

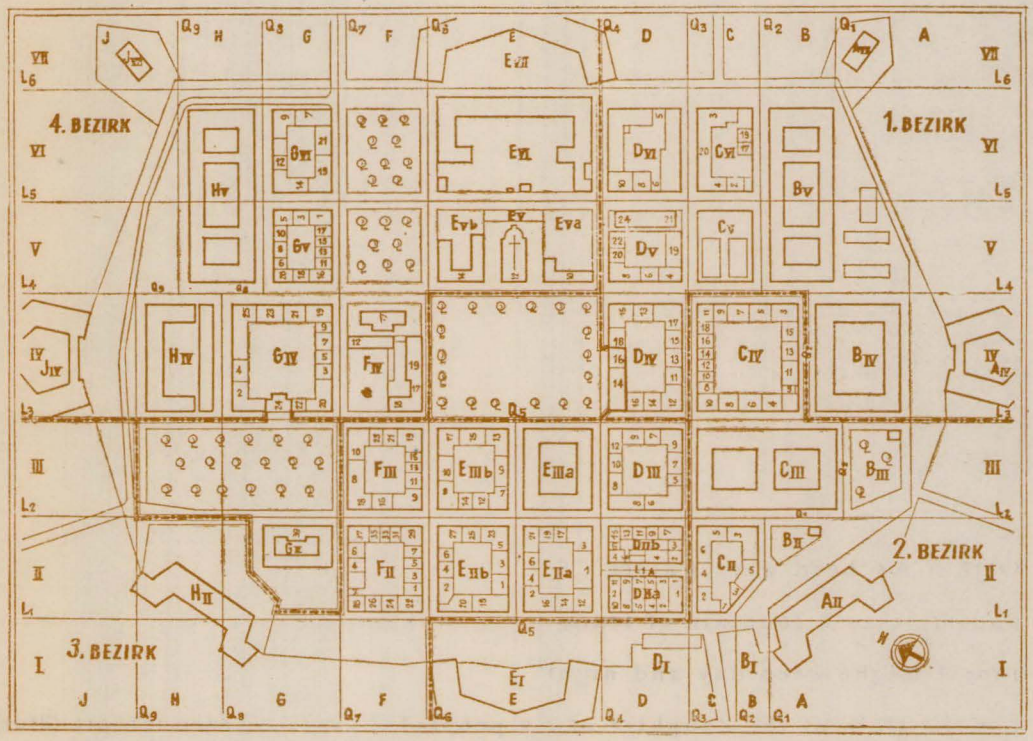
THE CAMP / Josef Polák

FACTS AND FIGURES / Josef Polák

O that my head were waters,
and my eyes a fountain of tears,
that I might weep day and night
for the slain of the daughter of my people! Jeremiah 9:1 (8:23)

KAREL LAGUS

OVERTURE



THERE are difficulties with the evacuation of the Jews from the Protectorate. Terezín might be most suitably used as a ghetto. After the evacuation of the Jews from this temporary concentration camp to eastern territories (when their numbers will already be greatly decimated), the entire area of Terezín could be changed into a model German settlement... Transport to the ghetto of Terezín would not require much time. Two to three trains containing a thousand Jews each could be sent every day. According to the well-tried method, let each Jew take with him luggage up to 50 kilograms in weight and food for from a fortnight up to four weeks, which will make it easier for us. Straw will be allocated to the empty flats in the ghetto, for beds would take up too much room. The larger flats in the good houses may be at disposal only as official flats for the 'Zentralstelle' in the ghetto, for the Council of Elders, the food commissariat and especially the corps of guards. Let the Jews build flats under the earth..."

This is an extract from the official records of a meeting held on October 10, 1941, at the Prague Castle in the office of the newly appointed Vice-Reichsprotektor SS-Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich. The meeting dealt with the solution of the Jewish problem. Besides Heydrich, SS-Gruppenführer Karl Hermann Frank, SS-Obersturmbannführers Böhme, Maurer and von Gregory, SS-Sturmbannführer Adolf Eichmann and SS-Hauptsturmführers Günther and Wolfram were present.

A week later, on October 17, 1941, another top-secret meeting was held; in addition to the above, there were also present SA-Brigadeführer Dr. von Burgsdorff, SS-Obersturmbannführers Dr. Geschke and Sowa, SS-Sturmbannführer Jacobi and the ministry department heads Dr. Bertsch and Dr. Fuchs.

The following is an extract from the official records:

"... First a transport of five thousand Jews will be evacuated to Łodż. Some have already left. When all five thousand have been evacuated, a short news item must be issued to the press, stressing in a suitable manner how quickly Reichs-German work is organized. Then a short pause must follow, so as not to interfere with preparations for further evacuations or transports to ghettos. Meanwhile, the Jews from Bohemia and Moravia will be assembled for evacuation, each time in a temporary concentration camp. For this purpose the Commander-in-Chief attached to the office of the Reichsprotektor will have completely evacuated all armed forces from Terezín. The Czechs there will be advised to move elsewhere. If the plots of land are not yet Reich property, they will be bought up by the 'Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung' and thus they will become German property. Fifty to sixty thousand Jews may be comfortably accommodated in Terezín. From there the Jews will go East. Minsk and Riga have already expressed agreement to accept fifty thousand Jews each. After the complete evacuation of the Jews, Terezín will, according to a perfect plan, be settled by Germans and become a centre of German life. Its position is most suitable for this purpose. Thus another outpost will be established, in keeping with the ideas of the Reichs Leader of the SS as well as the Reichs Commissar for the Propagation of German Culture. Under no account must any details of these plans become public. All participants of the meeting have been specially warned of that. The security police, in conjunction with the chief of the IVth department, will send a news item to the press on the

evacuation of the Jews, if necessary including a warning to the Czechs not to defend the Jews; otherwise they, too, might be evacuated and punished as the Jews are. It should be considered whether, for reasons of propaganda, two or three well-known Czechs, known to have befriended Jews, should not be treated in the same way . . ."

The other temporary concentration camp for the evacuation of the Jews was—according to Nazi plans—to have been established in Kyjov, Moravia. But this was found unnecessary, due to the great speed with which transports from Terezín went East. Thus, as early as April 14, 1942, the "Befehlshaber der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD" was able to inform the Protectorate Ministry of the Interior that "under present conditions the establishment of another concentration camp for Jews from the Protectorate was not being considered."

Terezín suited the Nazis for many reasons. It is a former military fortress, whose strategic task it was to protect the roads along the Labe against invasion of the Prussians into Bohemia. According to old Austrian plans, Terezín could be defended by a garrison of 16 000 men at the most, as it was not possible to accommodate a larger number of soldiers there. But the Nazis managed to crowd several times as many prisoners into it. The entire fortress was built symmetrically, was easily controlled, and separated from the neighbourhood by its fortifications. There were barracks, military administration buildings and store houses everywhere. The civilian population depended for their livelihood entirely on the garrison. When the garrison was moved they lost their means of existence and so it was comparatively easy to make them move. Terezín itself was divided into two parts—the Large and the Small Fortress—by the river Ohře and its inundation area. The Small Fortress had already been used as a prison under the Austrian monarchy. The Gestapo took it over on June 10, 1940, and established a police prison there. The SS garrison of the Small Fortress could also—in case of need—be used for the concentration camp in the Large Fortress, in the town. In the close neighbourhood of Terezín there lies the town of Litoměřice (Leitmeritz), beyond the frontiers of what was then the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Nazi troops and an SS garrison were stationed there, who could be used both for the camp as well as against it. The close vicinity of the Reich and Litoměřice, then a German town, prevented the prisoners from finding support among the local population. The surrounding Czech villages were too far distant. The village of Bohušovice on the Ohře, at that time the frontier station, was the only exception. According to SS plans, Terezín was to be only a transit and re-loading station for prisoner transports. These were the considerations that led to Terezín being chosen, from among nearly twenty suggested towns in Bohemia, as a suitable place for the establishment of a Jewish concentration camp.

The original intention, therefore, was for Terezín to become a transit camp for Jews from Bohemia and Moravia. How many Jews were there, how had they come to Bohemia and Moravia, and what was their fate? The well-known Czech historian, František Palacký, in his most important work *The History of the Czech Nation*, mentions that the presence of Jews in Bohemia had been proved as early as the 10th century A.D. by documents that have been preserved. Another Czech historian, Vaclav Tomek, writes in his *History of the City of Prague*: "From earliest times onwards

the Jews have held first place among the citizens of Prague. We do not find any reports of their arrival in Bohemia, because this undoubtedly occurred during ancient times. Jews were probably already in the Czech lands at the time of the Marcomans. They were here in pagan times among the pagan Czechs and, according to all indications, they were highly honoured in the oldest historical period known to us."

In the year 1076, there were 5250 Jews living in Prague. King Vratislav granted them the same rights as the German merchants in 1092. But as early as 1096 the first pogrom took place. The German Crusaders, passing through Prague on their journey to the Holy Land, forced the Jews to be baptized. Whoever resisted was killed. The protests of Kosmas, Bishop of Prague, who spoke out against such an un-Christian manner of spreading the Gospel, were ignored.

For a second time, the German Crusaders caused persecution of the Jews in Bohemia. This was in the last years of the reign of King Wenceslas I, in the mid-thirteenth century. At that time they were also passing through Prague on their way to the Holy Land and demanded money from the Jews of Prague. When they received nothing, grave acts of violence took place. But this time the Prague Jews, secretly supported by the King, put up resistance and over 200 Crusaders were killed.

Nevertheless, the influence of the Jews in Prague considerably decreased from that time onwards, just as that of the German merchants increased. Who was it then, that drew advantage from the anti-Jewish feeling created by the Crusaders? The German merchants. It was the Crusaders who unleashed anti-Semitism in Bohemia. The Nazi elite—the SS-men—regarded themselves as the successors of the Crusaders. Their leader, Heinrich Himmler, wanted to turn the SS into a modern Order of the Cross. And, just as the Crusaders committed their greatest cruelties in the name of the cross, so the Nazis had their cross, the swastika. And it was they who brought to Bohemia and Moravia, and indeed to all Europe, the greatest slaughter of Jews the world has ever witnessed.

The Jews' rights in Bohemia and Moravia were based on the privilegium granted by King Přemysl Otakar II in 1254. It was confirmed by King John of Luxemburg, and again in 1356 by Emperor Charles IV. Charles IV granted the Jews the right to their own banner, which may still be seen at the Old-New Synagogue in Prague, though only in a restored state.

In Hussite times, efforts were made to give the Jews equal rights. They were not forced to live in the Jewish quarters and the number of Jewish communities in Bohemia and Moravia doubled during that period.

King Vladislav II issued an interesting regulation concerning the Jews in 1492, granting Jews the right to charge double interest. Where a Christian takes 10 per cent, the Jew might take 20 per cent for a year. "First they must give to the King, what is the King's, then to the Lord they serve they must pay interest themselves, they must pay every office to which they appeal, and finally they must have something to live on with their wives and children."

This then, was "Jewish usury" in practice. The king, the nobility and the officials received money. They were not allowed to lend money at interest, which was prohibited by the laws of the Church. Thus they remained pure, without sin, but

they grabbed the profits just the same, which the Jews had to pay out to them as their share in the interest charged.

At the Parliament of the Czech Lands in 1501 it was decided that the Jews would be suffered for all times by the Czech Crown. If any one of them should commit a crime, only he was to be punished and not all Jewry. Evidently the Czech Estates at that time were far more progressive and humane than the Nazis in 1938, who inflicted collective punishment on the Reichs German Jews for the attempt at assassination by Grynszpan in Paris.

In 1622, the first Jew was raised to the nobility. He was the court banker Jacob Bashevi, who received the name von Treuenberg from Emperor Ferdinand II. His coat-of-arms, a blue lion and eight red stars, is carved, and can be seen to this day, on the tombstone of his wife at the Old Jewish Cemetery in Prague.

In 1726, the number of Jewish families in Bohemia and Moravia was ascertained. There were 8,600 at that time. But not quite three decades later, in 1753, as many as 10,825 were counted. This is why we may estimate the number of Jews then living in Bohemia and Moravia at about fifty to seventy thousand. The Jews formed their own Jewish communities, even though their rights at that time were considerably limited. Emperor Joseph II (1780—1790) abolished these Jewish communities, but in many ways the Jews were granted equal rights. They were allowed to live in houses outside the Jewish quarters, if they used them for manufactures, and Jewish wholesale merchants and business men were allowed to live and carry on their trade anywhere. Joseph II's successor, Leopold II, permitted Jews to attend the universities and take their doctor's degrees, and to plead before the law courts.

The Jews gained full, equal rights before the law in 1848 and finally in 1860, when the basic state laws were issued. The number of Jews in Bohemia and Moravia, according to the official census, were as follows:

	Bohemia	Moravia	Total
1830	67,330	32,244	99,574
1850	86,339	44,209	130,548
1890	94,479	55,367	149,846
1910	85,826	48,170	133,996
1921	79,777	45,306	125,083
1930	76,301	41,250	117,551

Since the turn of the century the number of Jews in Bohemia and Moravia has been decreasing. The reasons were either emigration or change of religion. The given numbers refer only to those who professed Jewish religion in the census.

These figures are not comparable with the number of people considered as Jews according to the Nuremberg racial laws.

According to the 1930 census 67,173 Jews earned their living in Bohemia and Moravia. Of these 37 883 were independent enterprisers, but the remaining 29,290 were employed, manual workers totalled 5,435, office workers 13,969 and the rest held other employment.

This was the situation until the Nazis came. After the Munich *diktat,* during the

so-called Second Republic and following Hitler's demarche, the authorities were already stricter towards German and Austrian emigrants. Most of these emigrants were Jews. There were about 15,000, to which about 25,000 Jewish fugitives from the border regions, i.e., the frontier districts that had to be handed over to Hitler, should be added.

On December 13, 1938, Beran, then Czechoslovak Prime Minister, addressed the National Assembly on the program of the new government. In this address he stated that the attitude of the state towards Jews who had long lived on the territory of Czechoslovakia and expressed a positive attitude towards the needs of the state and its nation, would not be unfavourable. In spite of that, measures of an administrative nature had already been taken to eliminate Jews from government service and public functions. Their entry into various professions also became more difficult.

When the Nazis occupied the Czech lands on March 15, 1939, to form the so-called Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, the SS took the "solution" of the Jewish problem into their own hands. They did so formally in July 1939, when the Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung was established in Prague, which was founded by Adolf Eichmann after the model of the Vienna Zentralstelle.

Granting permission to emigrate was only a small part of the work carried out by the Zentralstelle, whose main task was to register all Jewish property, as well as all Jewish persons according to the Nuremberg racial laws, and later on their concentration and "liquidation".

In due course the Nuremberg racial laws were introduced in practice throughout the Protectorate. This was done by the Reichsprotektor's decree of June 21, 1939, concerning Jewish property and deciding who was to be regarded as a Jew. Only the so-called "critical" days were adjusted to the date of the occupation of Bohemia and Moravia. The dates March 17, 1939, and February 1, 1940, were valid, and not the "critical" days of the Nuremberg laws, i.e. September 15, 1935, and July 31, 1936. This, however, lasted for only a very few days. The Reichs Ministry of the Interior objected and on July 1, 1939, a correction was published in the Prague daily *Der Neue Tag*. To bring the regulations valid in the Protectorate into agreement with those valid in the Reich, the original dates of the Nuremberg racial laws were also introduced in the Protectorate.

From that day on there were many daily sad surprises in store for the Jews. Every day there appeared laws, orders, decrees, prohibitions, instructions, directions and injunctions issued by the Reichs government, the Reichs Ministry of the Interior, the Reichsprotektor, various Oberland councils, the Gestapo, the Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung, etc. Finally, every SS-man felt empowered to issue orders to the Jews. Nazis were gradually put into the head positions in all protectorate offices and from that moment onwards the protectorate authorities also issued anti-Jewish orders and prohibitions. As in all other Nazi-occupied countries, the final aim of all these prohibitions, orders and injunctions was here, also, to humiliate the Jews, to exclude them gradually from human society, to isolate them from their surroundings and finally to bring about their complete subjugation by turning them into submissive slaves of the Nazi overlords.

Following the Reichsprotektor's order of March 5, 1940, all persons coming under the Nuremberg laws had to report at the Jewish Religious Community, even if they

had no religious belief, or were members of another church. Thus, all were registered who were considered to be Jews according to the Nuremberg laws. Not all, actually, because many did not report, and hid in various ways.

Even before deportations began, the Jews were already being systematically starved under wartime rationing. Their ration books were stamped "J". On such ration books no white bread, meat, eggs, were issued. Jews were not allowed to receive any pulse, fruit, jam and marmalade, stewed fruit, cheese, and other dairy products, sweets, fish and fish products, poultry and game, yeast, sauerkraut, onions and garlic, honey, alcoholic drinks including beer, etc. Nor were Jews issued tobacco or tobacco products. Thus the Gestapo held a powerful weapon. In their frequent searches of Jewish households they immediately made arrests, if they found some of the forbidden goods.

It was prohibited to issue clothing material coupons to Jews or vouchers for ready-made clothes; they were only permitted rations for sewing material up to the value of 2 crowns per quarter. Nor was anyone allowed to sell Jews caps, suitcases, rucksacks or any leather goods. Jews were allowed to do their shopping only between 3 and 5 p.m.

Jews were banned from parks, cinemas, theatres, museums, exhibitions, libraries, public rooms, baths, etc. They could not leave their lodgings after 8 p.m. They were not allowed to walk on the embankment, the main squares, and a great number of streets. They could leave the parish in which they lived only with the written permission of the Gestapo. Only then were they permitted to use rail transport, but only slow trains, and then only the last compartment of the last carriage of the train. They were admitted to public vehicles in the towns only in exceptional cases and then only in the back platform of the last car.

Jews had to accept the work allocated to them by the Labour Exchange. They were not entitled to pay for overtime, or hours worked on Sundays and holidays. They had no right to holidays. Regulations concerning working hours did not affect Jews. Nor were the Jews entitled to sickness benefits when they were ill. What the employer saved in this way had to be handed over to the Zentralstelle, i.e., the SS.

Teaching Jewish children was forbidden. They were not allowed to receive private lessons, either. All synagogues and prayer houses were closed in October 1941. They were then used as store houses for property taken away from the Jews and for furniture left behind in the flats after deportation.

All radios were taken away from the Jews on the Day of Atonement in 1939. Later on, they also had to turn in photographic and measuring instruments, typewriters and calculating machines, bicycles, musical instruments, gramophones, records, ski boots and ski outfits, fur coats and woollen clothes, etc.

All Jewish clubs and corporations were dissolved. In the course of time all Jewish religious communities were dissolved; there existed 136 in Bohemia and Moravia before the Nazi occupation. Only the Prague Jewish Religious Community remained, which, as the executive body for the orders of the Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung, developed into a large institution and was later on called Ältestenrat der Juden.

Before deportations began, all Jews were registered once more. This registration

was carried out by the Zentralstelle. About one thousand persons had to be registered daily. Entire families were called, and every person had to bring all his documents with him. Long questionnaires had to be filled in and over a hundred questions answered. Most of the questions referred to property. There were separate columns for everything, even for the number of brooms and coal shovels. Everything had to be proved. Then everybody had to go in person to the Zentralstelle with the finished questionnaire, which had in the meantime developed into a large file of papers. After a few hour's waiting, exposed to the humiliating ridicule of the SS-men who made the final check, they were finally able to hand in their papers.

Again there were many who did not report for this registration. Some went into hiding, others lived in the countryside with false papers, still others managed to escape illegally across the frontiers, especially over Slovakia to Hungary. Many behaved in the same way when faced with deportation. They did not join their transport. According to the registry department of the Prague Jewish Religious Community there were still 8,606 Jews so far not deported and living in Bohemia and Moravia, by August 31, 1943, but the exact address was known only in the case of 7,490 persons. Over one thousand could not be found. The Zentralstelle reported such cases to the Czech police.

As early as March 1, 1940, Jews had to present their identity cards to the police authorities, where they were stamped with "J". External marks distinguishing Jews were introduced by a police order of September 1, 1941. Every Jew, including children over six years of age, had to wear the Star of David. The inscription on the star was the same in the protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia as in the German Reich, the German word "Jude". Jews who lived in "mixed" marriage or whose children were "mixed" did not have to wear the star. This exception was valid in the protectorate only for a few days, for then the Reichs Ministry of the Interior issued instructions that this exception was valid only when the "Aryan" husband or wife was a Reichs German citizen.

In the meantime—shortly before the attack on the Soviet Union—Hitler ordered the physical "liquidation" of the Jews. On July 31, 1941, Goering entrusted the head of the security police and SD Obergruppenführer SS Reinhard Heydrich with the preparation and organization of the "final solution of the Jewish problem." How Heydrich prepared and organized this final solution in Bohemia and Moravia is evident from the minutes of the two meetings quoted at the beginning of this chapter.

The first five transports left Prague for Łodż, according to plan on October 16, 21, and 31, and on November 3, 1941. Each transport consisted of one thousand persons, making a total of 5,000. On November 26, 1941, a transport of one thousand persons was sent from Brno to Minsk. The next transports headed for Terezín.

Department "G" had already been established at the Prague Jewish Religious Community, which worked feverishly on plans for establishing the allegedly self-administered Jewish Ghetto in Terezín. SS-Obersturmführer Dr. Siegfried Seidl, appointed in advance as the future commander of the Terezín concentration camp, was already in office at the Prague Zentralstelle. It was to him that the previously

selected Judenältester of the ghetto Jacob Edelstein and his deputy Otto Zucker had to come for orders.

Nobody knew at the Jewish Religious Community what the SS-men knew, that Terezín, too, was merely a transit station on the road to death. Everybody thought that by quickly establishing the camp in Terezín, further transports to the East could be prevented. People thought that the Jews from the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia would be able to wait for the end of the war in Terezín, many even thought that the Terezín camp might be only a preparation for the expected Jewish emigration to Palestine. This is why a number of proposals for the organization of the planned ghetto were speedily drawn up, various statutes were worked out, plans submitted for the introduction of various manufactures in Terezín to make the ghetto economically self-sufficient. In short, they believed the promises of the SS-men, that the Terezín ghetto would be a town with real Jewish self-administration and with the preservation of certain private legal relationships. Of all the submitted proposals, however, only those that suited the Nazis' intentions and aims were put into practice in Terezín. Instead of the promised town with self-administration, Terezín became a concentration camp with a concentration camp's strict regime.

On Seidl's orders the Prague Jewish Religious Community was to set up a work team consisting of experts and workers, who were to take over the Terezín barracks, from which the Nazi armed forces had been withdrawn, and prepare them for the accommodation of the Jews. The Jewish Religious Community included among those experts 35 city administrators, two of them police specialists, one a postal expert and one a transport specialist: furthermore there were 15 financial and 41 economic specialists, among them also experts for automobile transport. The 50 technical specialists included also one official in charge of anti-aircraft defence and the foreman of a motorcar repair shop; among the worker-specialists were six drivers and two telephone operators. It is evident from all this, how incorrectly and optimistically the Jewish Religious Community regarded the organization of the Ghetto that was under preparation.

Volunteers also reported for the work team, the so-called Aufbaukommando, as they had heard that their families would be saved from transports to the East. On November 19, 1941, Seidl demanded to be shown the list of names for the Aufbaukommando. He crossed off all suggested specialists and had about a hundred unskilled workers included in their place. This readjusted Aufbaukommando really left for Terezín on November 24, 1941. It consisted of about 342 young men, the nucleus of the Jewish concentration camp in Terezín.

Another Arbeitskommando arrived in Terezín on December 4, 1941, consisting of one thousand men, simultaneously with the so-called staff, headed by Jacob Edelstein and Otto Zucker. But already previous to this and, despite the repeated promises of the SS-men, two transports of Jews had been sent to Terezín and then one transport after the other started to arrive.

The transports were dispatched from collection centres. The largest in the "Protectorate" of Bohemia and Moravia was in Prague on the site of the former radio section of the Prague Sample Fair, the other transports were dispatched from towns where Oberlandrate were situated. The dispatching of one transport from the

collection centre usually took three days. On entering this collection centre the Jew became a mere number. People lay on the ground, one beside the other, according to their numbers—men, women and children, all together. According to their numbers they were called to various tables. At one, keys of the flats were handed in, at the next ration books, then the remaining money, at the fourth valuables, at the fifth personal documents, at the sixth various questionnaires and forms had to be filled in. Everything was again checked by the SS-men, sudden searches were made day and night, everything was accompanied by constant shouting, running, insults, blows—it was time for the Jews to get used to what was in store for them.

The Jews were deported and their flats remained. On October 13, 1941, the Zentralstelle issued orders for the establishment of a special office in the Jewish Religious Community in Prague to look after the empty flats. This new institution, the so-called "Treuhandstelle", eventually employed several hundred people. The flats were inspected, everything was registered, perishable goods taken away, then the flats were sealed up and gradually dismantled. All that remained in the flats was sorted, packed, stored, evaluated and registered, everything was washed or dry-cleaned and repaired. Everything was used again, the names of the former owners and their *ex libris* were removed from the books, inscriptions and monograms were removed from cutlery, cigarette cases, etc. Monograms were picked from linen. Only refuse was sorted for scrap.

The Treuhandstelle had its storehouses in the closed synagogues and prayer houses, in the meeting rooms of the dissolved Jewish clubs and organizations and in a number of rented rooms. On January 14, 1944, it had, in Prague alone, 54 large store houses, specialized according to the objects stored. According to reports up to March 17, 1943, when only about half of the empty Jewish flats had been dismantled, the Treuhandstelle had in its stores 1,264,999 various textile products, 55,454 pictures, 778,195 books, 621,909 objects of glass and porcelain, 603 pianos, 9,943 various *objets d'art*, 21,008 carpets, 1,321,741 household and kitchen utensils, 13,207 complete sets of room furniture or kitchen equipment, and many other things. At the same time a large part had already been sold or sent to the Reich as "Winterhilfe."

A circular dated May 26, 1942, and issued by SS-Obersturmbannführer Böhme, Commander of the Security Police and Sicherheitsdienst in the protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, to all officesof the Reichsprotector, the armed forces, police, the Nazi party, best shows the extent and methods of this enterprise. It runs as follows:

"All sorts of opinions have been recently expressed concerning the Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung in Prague, subordinate to the Commander of the Security Police and SD, which might undermine the position o fthis service among the public and therefore also of my office. I should like to state the following: If the German population in Prague, and especially the officials and other members of the state service today are able to move into decent flats and furthermore, if they are able, at the present time, to buy furniture at very reasonable prices, then this is entirely due to the work of the Zentralstelle. It seems that it has generally been forgotten what the conditions are elsewhere in the Reich. It is only thanks to the initiative

of the Zentralstelle that Jews have been prevented from selling their flats to the Czechs for a song. Nobody would have been able to accuse the Zentralstelle of anything, if they had not carried out all measures to prevent these Jewish intentions. I do not have to stress in particular, that this great task was carried out with the least possible expenditure in work by Germans, and as carefully, precisely and correctly as possible. The Zentralstelle, as a German institution, naturally helps all German 'Volksgenossen' willingly, but this cannot go so far as to turn into a department store or housing agency. I should not like to be forced, in the distasteful cases that are reported to me again and again, to have to ascertain, generally and in detail, at what time the gentlemen making the greatest demands have become anti-Semites. It is unbelievable effrontery if members of the SS, who already have the very unpleasant task of currently dealing with Jews, have to let themselves be importuned by persons who, you can tell from miles away, were probably three years ago still sitting with some Prague Jews in some Prague cafés. I should like to ask, therefore, that more understanding be shown the work of the Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung."

Signed: Böhme m.p.

The official stamp with the Reichs emblem and the swastika is affixed to the signature. It should be unnecessary to comment further on the way in which the Nazis enriched themselves with the aid of Jewish property.

This is the Way to Theresienstadt

BY ILSE WEBER

This is the way to Theresienstadt
which thousands have wearily walked.
Each one of the thousands have suffered
the same injustice, from the first to the last.
They marched along, with their heads to the ground,
the Star of David pinned on to their breasts,
their tired feet sore and covered with dust,

their tortured souls torn with pain and unrest.
Harassed by orders, their wound-stricken hands
carried their heavy burdens.
O endless road in the summer heat
that burned in thirsty throats.
This is the road to Theresienstadt,
drenched with the blood of our hearts,
where greybeards, dying from agony,
dropped down to the stony path.
It is paved with the horrors and misery
where rivers of tears have been shed
by children crying and women weeping
in utter helplessness and dread.
Here old men stumbled with empty looks
and followed meekly the flock.
So many of them will never go back
in the hope of a merciful grave.
This, too, is the road on which hurriedly rolled
the unceasing trucks that carried away
the aching loads of those destined to die.
This is the road to Theresienstadt,
plastered with suffering and pain.
And he who has seen it once in his life
will never forget it again.

JOSEF POLÁK

THE CAMP

November 1941 — June 1942



THE TOWN, founded in 1780 by Emperor Joseph II in honour of his mother, Maria Theresia, lies in a gentle plain with a few small hills, among meadows and gardens, at the confluence of the rivers Ohře and Labe. On the distant horizon you can see the cone-shaped outlines of the Bohemian Central Mountain Range. Near and to one side of Terezín, lies the town of Litoměřice, and to the other the little town of Bohušovice, which at that time was the terminus and frontier station of Bohemia. A three-kilometre-long road leads from the Bohušovice railway station to Terezín.

The first and most characteristic features the visitor will notice on coming to Terezín are the tower of the water works, the high scarps and the deep trenches that, filled with water, were to protect the town from the enemy. The scarps and trenches border the town on all sides in the shape of a many-pointed star. They formed the Large Fortress and, close by, the Small Fortress. This was a much feared police prison during the Nazi occupation, where thousands of people lost their lives.

The fortress of Terezín was never beleaguered in the course of history. If it happened to be in the way of an advancing army, it was outflanked. Terezín was abolished as a fortress in 1882, but remained a garrison town. The fortified walls remained and so did the long, bifurcated casemates and underground passages, as well as the barracks. At that time 3,500 persons lived in the town in 219 houses. They were mostly shop-keepers, businessmen and artisans who depended on the garrison for their livelihood. About the same number of soldiers were quartered in eleven barracks situated in various parts of the town. In the centre of the town is a large square with a church and administrative buildings. The town is built symmetrically with absolutely straight streets intersecting at right angles. The blocks of houses are also of the same size, as well as the barracks, even the internal ground plan has the same number of gates, courts, galleries and staircases. The barracks are old, dismal, with primitive hygienic facilities. The overwhelming majority of the other dwellings are also old, low, one-storey houses with small dark yards, without gardens and having no sun.

To this town the first transport of Jewish prisoners came on November 24, 1941—342 young men, workers and craftsmen, who were to build the camp. They were the so-called Aufbaukommando. Their arrival marks the beginning of the history of the Terezín concentration camp.

The German Wehrmacht had evacuated the barracks, leaving only the bare wall behind. The new inhabitants lie on pallets on the ground, close together like sardines, their rucksacks under their heads. They live on their own meagre provisions, for there is neither a place to cook nor provisions. They are locked into the barracks and guarded by gendarmes.

On November 30 and December 2, another two thousand prisoners arrive, men, women, children, old people, and on December 4, a thousand more young men to help the Aufbaukommando.

The first Judenältester arrives—Jacob Edelstein with his deputy Otto Zucker and a staff of 21 helpers. Nothing is ready, there is nothing to eat, there is nothing to heat with, there are not enough pallets; in one room for ten soldiers 50 prisoners are penned together, and up to 500 in each of the huge, bitterly cold concrete store rooms.

The men leave for work every day in groups. They are always accompanied by sentries. At the end of the first week in December, they are separated from the women and children and the staff also moves into a special building.

The hopes for life in the work camp gradually disappear with the wave of prohibitions and orders issued daily: men are forbidden to meet together with women it is forbidden to write home; there is martial law for illegal postal communications; contact with the gentile population is prohibited; smoking is punished; everybody must be close-shaven; nobody is allowed to walk on the pavement and every uniformed person must be saluted. It is forbidden to go apart from the work group, to leave one's lodging after curfew, to use the shops, to sing or whistle in the street, to collect horse chestnuts, to pick field flowers, to touch a chimney-sweep "for luck". The prisoners have to hand in money, stamps and writing paper, cigarettes and tobacco, tinned foods, medicaments and many other things. They are punished by 10 to 50 blows with a cane for small offences, for larger ones by several months' imprisonment as well. Punishment by beating is frequent and must be carried out by the prisoners themselves. SS-man Bergel supervises the beating, and takes a hand in it himself with great pleasure. When the prisoner who has to inflict punishment does not hit hard enough, he receives the same number of blows in punishment as the condemned.

Orders of the self-governing body are issued daily, passing on the orders of the Nazi Command. There SS-Obersturmführer Dr. Siegfried Seidl is in charge with his henchmen.

The basic organization takes shape: every room has its commander, several rooms together form a group led by the Gruppenältester, who is subordinate to the commander of the building. The food commissariat is established, the technical commissariat, the sick bay, kitchen, central labour office and disciplinary service. But there are no vehicles for transport, no equipment for the clinic, not enough boilers for the kitchen, there is not enough water, there is no fuel, there is nothing at all.

The prisoners breakfast on unsweetened black substitute coffee, for lunch they get watery soup made from some powder, their supper is dry bread. They must queue up for several hours for every meal.

The Council of Elders is appointed to arrange and build up everything. At the end of the year the first two prisoners escape from the camp. But in the barrack stables the prisoners meet in the evenings to devote their leisure time to culture, reciting, song, music.

Events take place in January and February, that once and for all rob the prisoners of any illusions they might still have had of surviving the war in the work camp. For a prohibited, furtive conversation with his own wife—a gentile who came to see her husband in the camp, for an illegal message sent to his mother, and other, similar "offences" nine prisoners were hanged on January 10, 1942, and seven others on February, 26. Some of them trusted the word of a Nazi officer who had promised that they would go unpunished, if they would voluntarily admit their guilt. They paid their faith in Nazi promises with their lives. They died like heroes with a song on their lips and firmly believing in the defeat of fascism.

The other event that helped in putting an end to the optimists' last hopes that intern-

ment at the Terezín camp was the last station in the Jews' pilgrimage, were reports about transports to the East. On January 9, 1942, the first transport leaves Terezín, completely changing the purpose of this camp. Terezín from this day on is no longer a last refuge and becomes a mere transit station on the long journey of the Jewish people. Transports to the East, from this day on, become a constant threat, pursuing the prisoners night and day. From this day on, every Terezín prisoner's entire striving is directed towards remaining in Terezín and to escape deportation. These efforts affect his psychological, social, work, moral and sexual relations. The Terezín camp becomes a place where death sentences are passed by inclusion in transport, sentences that are then executed in the "liquidation" camps of the East. We may best understand the terror of the Terezín prisoners in the face of deportation, by the fact that out of 87,000 prisoners deported from Terezín, so far only 3,100 are known to have returned home after the war.

Transports to the East were ordered by the Terezín SS-Command on instructions from Berlin. The SS-Command laid down directives concerning the number of people, the category not to be deported and the category to be included in transports. Actual selection for transport was entrusted to the self-governing body. Directives for inclusion on the transport constantly changed, according to the situation and the Nazi's intentions.

There was one time, when age was a protection, and then there was a time when all old people were sacrificed so as not to be a hindrance to the Nazis. There was a time when illness protected against deportation and there was a time when all the patients of the T.B. ward were included . . . In the same way orphans, invalids and mental patients were sacrificed. There was a time when certain categories of work were exempt, and there was a time when it was these previously protected categories that had to go. For twenty months all members of the Aufbaukommando were safe from deportation, only to be deported in the end to the last man. The so-called ghetto guard met with the same fate. For nearly three years family ties were left intact, but in September 1944 men were hauled away from the camp without their wives and children. Protection was given distinguished prisoners, people who were outstanding in military science, the arts, science, industry, finance or political life. A few prisoners who were in the good graces of some influential German personality were also protected. Some of the workers in the self-government, their families and nearest relatives were protected.

People called up for transport assembled with the last remnants of property—their bedrolls and a pack of the most necessary things—at the meeting place, where they usually spent one or more days and nights. Even here people were still taken out of the transports and others took their place. Then they were driven—with numbers tied round their necks and carrying their packs—to the train and stuffed into the goods trains, 70 to 90 in a car.

On January 9 and 15, the two first transports of a thousand persons each leave the Terezín camp for Riga in this way. At that time there are already over 7,000 prisoners in the camp, but all the time more people are arriving from Moravia and Bohemia, and terror of transportation hangs constantly over the prisoners' heads. Two thousand leave the camp in March, seven thousand in April, three thousand in May. Small groups of prisoners depart to work in the mines and one thousand

women are sent to plant trees in the forests of Křivoklát. The whole camp is in a constant state of excitement and tension.

The self-governing body takes over some of the town installations, laboriously establishes kitchens, the most necessary workshops are set up. Water is still in short supply, so is electric power, there is danger of contagious diseases and a health service is established, lacking the most primitive equipment.

In the first half of February the prisoners are allowed to write to relatives or friends, thirty words written in block letters once a month. But at the beginning of May all mails are again forbidden. Only between the barracks is the local postal service permitted and so a husband can communicate with his wife at least in writing. That is of great importance, especially at the time of transports.

At the end of May, Heydrich is killed in Prague and the Nazis have thought up a farce for the Jews in the Terezín camp: each one of them has to sign a statement that he knows nothing about the assassin's attaché case and bicycle that were found. But a punitive transport of one thousand Jews leaves Prague for the East. Only one single person returned after the war. After the extermination of Lidice thirty Terezín prisoners leave to bury the Nazi victims. A flock of the Lidice sheep is driven to the Terezín camp.

Due to the constant arrivals and departures the prisoners' age groups vary. In the first months young people are in the great majority in the camp, but in May there are over 40 per cent old people. Basic changes take place in June: the Nazis order a speedy evacuation of the gentile population of Terezín, planned ever since the spring of 1942. This has very unfortunate results for the prisoners, because it robs them of any possibility of illegal contact with the outside world. On the other hand, the opening of the barrack gates means a certain relaxation—even though only within the fortifications—in the prisoners' contact with their families.

The Council of Elders is suddenly faced with a great task: to take over administration of more than two hundred more or less dilapidated old houses and to prepare them for a further influx of transports.

Another change influencing the further development in the history of the Terezín camp is the arrival of the first transports from Germany and Austria. One after the other transports of German and Austrian Jews arrive, whose average age is above 65. They have travelled in sealed carriages up to twenty hours, bringing their dying and dead to the camp. Many of them are infested with lice.

The gentile population hastily evacuates Terezín, and the self-government officially takes over control of the entire town, in which 21,000 prisoners are barely subsisting at the end of June. The number of dead rises—the construction of a crematorium is begun outside the town.

Terezín is no longer a concentration camp for prisoners from Bohemia and Moravia, and becomes a reloading station for prisoners from several European countries. The first stage in the development of the Terezín camp has come to an end.

A GHETTO OF OLD PEOPLE

July 1942—August 1943

The history of the second period of Terezín is considerably affected by the rapid increase in the number of prisoners arriving, their average age and the change in nationalities.

At the beginning of July, there are over 21,000 prisoners in the camp, at the end of the month more than double that number. In September the number of prisoners reaches its peak and nearly 58,500 people live in a town where before the war about 7,000 persons lived, including the garrison.

With the influx of old people the prisoners' average age drastically rises and in mid-September 1942, 58 per cent of the total are already people over 65 years of age. The change in nationality results in a change in persons administering self-government. On October 1st, 1942, representatives of the German and Austrian prisoners oin the self-government.

The rapid increase in the number of prisoners causes a serious problem of accommodation. Although Adolf Eichmann during his visit to Terezín in January of that year approved the type of double bunks for four prisoners, three-tier bunks have to be built accommodating six prisoners, to handle the rapidly increasing numbers. But these triple bunks are of no use to the old people. In July all barracks are over-crowded, in August all other houses are filled to overflowing and in September stables are filling, as well as passages and especially attics without lighting, where it is hot during the day and cold at night. The old people even lie in the underground casemates in the cold and mouldy damp.

People arriving during the summer and autumn of 1942, people who are characteristic for this period, form the most tragic group of all the Terezín prisoners. They are old people, mostly privileged in some way, holders of war medals, invalids. In the Reich they were made to believe that their departure meant "privileged resettlement". They let them sign fraudulent contracts for "accommodation in the ghetto for old persons" with board and lodging, medical service, laundry service, etc. For life-long accommodation these people paid with their last property, sometimes sums of tens of thousands of Reichsmarks. In the Reich one talked about Terezín as "Theresienbad" and the old German Jews brought with them their top hats, tails, lace dresses and parasols, and many, many superfluous things.

When the victims of this fantastic fraud arrive in Terezín, they demand accommodation in rooms facing south with a view of the lake—the Nazis called one of the camp streets Seestrasse—and are robbed of the remnants of their property. They end their pilgrimage in a dirty attic or underground cell, where they die within days or weeks, of pneumonia, diarrhoea, of hunger, on the floor, without straw mattresses, without blankets, without medical care.

The summer months of 1942 are a time of great hardship. There are not enough washrooms, not enough lavatories; lice, fleas, bugs, mice and rats increase. Clouds of flies settle on the refuse heaps that nobody clears away. The only means of transport at that time are age-old hearses from the abolished Jewish Religious Commun-

ities. They are used to transport bread, soup, luggage, building material, but also the sick and the old to the de-lousing station.

The overcrowding of the camp has its repercussions on the prisoners' diet. There are few kitchens and in them few boilers. The quickly baked bread soon turns mouldy, but is issued to the prisoners. Old people are further hit by the fact that their rations are lowest. Prisoners are divided into categories: prisoners doing heavy work get the highest rations, they get more bread, twice as much cooked food, and a higher ration of some other kinds of foods—at the expense of the old and the sick, whose rations are reduced. Normal, average rations are allocated to prisoners doing easy or administrative work.

This results in the old people wandering round the camp begging for watery soup and poking about in the piles of rotten potatoes. They stand in the food queues in front of the kitchens with their tins and bowls and gulp down their food as soon as they get it. These old bent, underfed, gaunt, shaking, pitiful figures wrapped in dirty, greasy, worn-out clothes drag themselves through all the streets of Terezín. And they die by the dozen: in July, 32 people die on an average daily, 75 in August and 131 by September.

When representatives of the Jewish Self-Government report this rapid increase in the mortality rate to the chief of the SS-Command, he answers laconically: "The clock is going right."

Carts, loaded high with coffins made of thin, unplaned wood, pass through the streets of the camp to the mortuary and then to the mass graves. In the beginning the corpses are buried in their coffins, later on without coffins, sixty at a time in one grave. The graves lie lower than the river, water infiltrates and the bodies are deposited in it. In September, the Terezín crematorium, erected by the prisoners themselves, starts to work. It has a capacity of 190 corpses daily and serves also for the victims from the Small Fortress in Terezín and the concentration camp in Litoměřice.

But the high mortality rate (89 per cent) is not sufficient for the Nazis. For it is unnecessary that so many people should be occupied in "caring" for old people; why should they be kept alive, why receive medical treatment, when it is possible to get rid of them? For the Nazis there is only one solution: deportation to the East. Thus nearly 18,000 old people, besides 2,000 other prisoners, are sent to their certain death in September and October 1942.

Before they are sent to their death, they are tormented once again by large-scale registration. Then trucks and trailors transport these human wrecks to the trains. They drive and throw them into the carriages, many on stretchers, the living together with the dying and the dead.

The sickness and mortality rate in the camp suddenly drops . . .

The summer and autumn of 1942 changes the character of the town. Streets and blocks are renamed, the town is divided into four districts, each with its own administration. There are no longer sentries stationed at the barrack gates and the people may walk in the streets without passes. Each barrack has a special purpose: one houses workers—there are about five thousand there—another women, one is destined to become a hospital, and the most miserable casemates are chosen for the old people's home. The blind and invalids have their own building, children and

toddlers get special quarters. One low barrack serves as "collection centre" for the arriving and departing transports, later becoming the storehouse where the Nazis pile up all the property stolen from the prisoners. The best buildings are reserved as dwellings and offices for the Nazis. The corps of guards also have their own barracks.

Arriving transports guarded by gendarmes are brought from the railway station to the collection centre. There the prisoners are registered, searched for forbidden goods, and their identity cards are stamped with the date of arrival and the inscription "ghettoisiert" (ghettoized). They get their food cards and are allotted living quarters. Some prisoners must go to the de-lousing station. From the middle of July 1942 onwards nobody receives his luggage—the contents are confiscated.

The confiscated things are sorted: valuable things—food, clothes or shoes—are sent to the Reich. Things of poor quality serve the Nazis for one of their frauds: they decide that "shops" must be opened in the camp. Thus, at the close of 1942, signboards appear over "food" stores, where you may buy mustard or some hot sandwich-spread that corrodes even the tin container overnight, old-clothes stores, where you might be able to buy your own trousers, a fancy-goods store offering an old case for sale with the transport number painted on it. There are several such stores in the camp and once every few months one may buy something there with special coupons issued to the prisoners by the camp's self-governing body.

In opening the stores in the Terezín camp the Nazis inaugurate a grandiose fraud, the tragicomedy of "beautifying the town," which is to serve propaganda purposes and throw dust in the eyes of the international commission. A number of other apparently civilian measures are to serve the same aim: a "café" is opened, where once in a while prisoners may listen to the music of the prison orchestra and drink a cup of substitute "coffee." At one time there even are newspapers, but they are no longer placed on the bulletin boards after the battle of Stalingrad.

Another institution to simulate a normal town is the opening of the Ghetto Court of Law. This court tries thieving, insults to officials of the self-governing body and similar offences. All this—the "shops," the café and the court—are filmed by the Nazis to enable them to show everywhere their humane solution of the Jewish question. This is a small prelude to the tremendous fraud that reached its climax in 1944.

At the end of September, postal communications—forbidden in May—are again permitted. It is no longer necessary to write in block capitals nor is the number of words limited. Parcels may now be sent to the camp, which somewhat raises the standard of living of a small part of the prisoners. But censorship continues and postcards are often delivered after several months' delay.

This apparently normal way of life is to be confirmed by the establishment of the "Bank of Jewish Self-Government," a purely fictitious institution to simulate the existence of self-government.

All these measures show that Terezín is changing its purpose—it is no longer to be a camp, but is to become a "ghetto." This is further indicated by the unpublicized abolition of the death penalty within the camp. People are no longer executed in the camp itself, which was the case in January and February, but are dragged to the near-by Small Fortress, where the executions take place.

Contagious diseases spread in the second half of 1942: 900 prisoners have scarlet fever, 600 hepatitis, over 350 typhus and 35,000 go down with typhoid fever. The daily death rate—after the old people have been deported—drops, but in the second part of the year nearly 15,000 prisoners die.

During this period 31 transports with more than 27,500 prisoners arrive in the camp from the territory of the so-called Protectorate, 124 transports come from Germany, carrying 31,000 prisoners, over 350 prisoners come from the occupied Czech territory, 11 transports from Austria with about 12,000 prisoners; 28,000 persons, mainly old people, are deported from the camp and 11 prisoners escape. On October 26, the first transport leaves Terezín for Auschwitz. But nobody in the camp knows the destination of this transport . . .

The catastrophic situation in the second half of 1942 reaches its climax in January 1943, with a series of new transports to the East: 7,000 persons are sacrificed before the long pause in deportation begins, lasting till that fateful September, a month that was always unpropitious for Terezín. The influx of prisoners to the camp also decreases, for many districts are already "judenrein". Dutch arrive, however, from the camp in Westerbork. Thus a new national group appears in the camp.

A certain stabilization in camp life sets in. The operation of the self-governing body also becomes more normal. It is headed by the "Judenältester" who has his deputy, and a few members form the Council of Elders. The management is in direct control of the security service, the central registry and the "bank".

The Ghetto Guard belongs to the first of these departments, a kind of ghetto police, later on the disciplinary service, some economic supervisors and the firemen. The central registry has the file of all prisoners, their daily number is registered and must be reported every morning to the SS-Command. Call-ups for the transports according to the selection of the transport commission, controlled by the self government and working on orders from the Nazi Command, are written here. The Central Registry also reports on escapes from the camp. The bank had also to be established to aid the Nazis in their future intentions of proving the normal way of life in the camp. In April 1943, Terezín banknotes to the value of 1, 2, 5, 10, 50 and 100 crowns are issued. They serve for the payment of fictitious wages and various fees. They have no value whatsoever, but that suits the Nazis. They pay them out to the prisoners instead of the hard currency some of them receive from abroad. In this way, the Nazis gain valuable currencies free of charge.

The Council of Elders consists of the five heads of the self-government departments and their deputies: internal administration, economic, technical, financial, and health department. In the course of time, the Central Labour Office, the Educational Department and the Department caring for young people are added.

The Economic Department includes the food office, materials and storehouses, manufactures, the SS-farm and transportation. Workshops, where many crafts are carried on, are installed in the camp. The largest uses wood for making bunks, for construction of houses, for coffins, but also furniture for the SS. The card-board box-making shop later on produces urns for the ashes of the deceased. The laundry is essential for the prisoners, where once in three months they may get 3 kilograms of laundry washed and some linen mended. Vastly important is the camp bakery.

Hundreds of women toil for the Nazis by splitting mica for war purposes. The extensive production of wooden boxes, introduced later on, also serves the Nazi Wehrmacht. The SS-farm belongs to agriculture and its entire output is strictly controlled, serving the needs of the Nazis only. The transportation group sees to the transport of food, coal, wood, material and the transport of the prisoners' luggage from the station to the camp and within the camp. For a long time only human beings are used as draft animals, often children, later there are trucks with trailers.

The internal administration includes a group in charge of all floor space, the administration of buildings, the registry and funeral service, postal service and communications. The legal department with the law court as a model institution serves the Nazis' propaganda purposes.

Allocation of living space and organizing moving is a difficult task, especially at a time when the number of prisoners is rapidly increasing. The frequent SS-orders demanding the quickest possible evacuation of entire blocks of barracks also tremendously complicate the housing problem. The administration of buildings sees to cleanliness in the houses and order in the issuing of food. Workers of the registry and funeral service deal with the burying of corpses and keep records of deaths and births. It is a speciality of the Terezín camp that you may—at least on paper—conclude marriage. Weddings of Jewish prisoners celebrated according to Jewish rites have also civil validity. But Terezín weddings are a union for death rather than for life. After the ceremony, one partner often joins the other in a transport going East. The mail enables prisoners to keep up contact among the buildings and is the only legal contact with the outside world. Parcels sent from outside are of great importance for the prisoners. All parcels are searched, in case they contain prohibited things. But postal communications are often forbidden for long periods of time as punitive measures. Prisoners who work at the post office, with the aid of Czech railway workers, keep up illegal contact with the surrounding area. The transport service is on duty during the arrival and departure of transports.

The technical department wages a constant struggle against shortage of materials. They are responsible for the water and power supply, plumbing, sewage and building. And an outstanding task of this department is the construction of the railway siding between the main Prague-Ústí line and Terezín, over which the first train passes on June lst, 1943. Furthermore they are in charge of road building and the construction of the crematorium, as well as guaranteeing a minimum supply of water and power. Jewish joiners, carpenters, locksmiths, plumbers, tinsmiths, bricklayers, roofers, stove fitters, boiler makers, glaziers, painters, and other craftsmen work here. Draftsmen and designers, for the most part fully employed on reports for the SS, also belong to this department.

The Central Labour Office controls the call-up for work of men, women and young persons. Everybody arriving at the camp and not a trained craftsman or member of a profession works in a team of workers doing the kind of work necessary at the given moment. The number of workers constantly changes with the arrival and departure of the transports. Much of the lighter work is carried out by prisoners younger than 16 or older than 65 years of age.

The financial department has a number of fictitious and useless tasks, serving

together with some other institutions of the camp's self-government ordered by the Nazis to keep up the illusion of normality and to deceive the world.

There are, however, three departments attached to the self-governing body, whose activity is fully directed towards the welfare and advantage of the prisoners. These are the health service, the department looking after young persons and children, and the group organizing the prisoners' cultural life. This work is of such importance to the prisoners that a special place has been allotted the description of it in this publication.

The fictitious Terezín self-government mainly carries out the SS-command's orders. The SS-command dictates instructions and daily receives reports from the Judenältester. All members of the Terezín Command are SS-members, some even belong to the SD organization. All have been assigned to Terezín in recognition of previous outstanding services.

The first camp commander was OSTF Dr. Siegfried Seidl, a cruel and vindictive man. It was he who introduced punishment by beating in the camp and who is responsible for the January and February executions. On his desk there is the caricature of a Jew with the caption: "Nicht ärgern, nur lächeln." ("Don't provoke, just smile.") The Lagerkommandant has a number of helpers at his disposal. First of all there is USTF Karl Bergel, a barber by profession, a notorious drunkard and fool, and therefore the more dangerous. He is the camp inspector, the master of the prison cells, persecutes the prisoners and shows great imagination in the invention of tortures, but he himself is a great coward. Later he is replaced by Scharführer Rudolf Haindl, most active in punishing the prisoners. He continuously cycles through the camp, and enters the rooms through the window to see whether he cannot catch some of the prisoners smoking. During deportations he is conspicuous for his cruelty, kicking the sick on the stretchers, beating prisoners with his truncheon, and he particularly enjoys slapping their faces.

Several other criminal types work at the SS Camp Command. Some are known for running prisoners down with their cars and killing them, others shoot them, and still others enjoy searching the women that work at the farm, to see whether they are not hiding potatoes or carrots on their bodies.

Among the Czech gendarmes are also a few monsters persecuting the prisoners. The overwhelming majority, however, help the prisoners, act as go-betweens between them and the outside world and behave well towards them. Several pay with their lives for being in touch with the prisoners.

A few SS-officers outside the camp also influence the development of Terezín. One of them is the superior of the Terezín commander and head of the Prague Zentralstelle der SS, STBF Hans Günther, "the smiling executioner," and author of some of the most drastic anti-Jewish measures. Communications between Berlin and Terezín are kept up by SS HSTF Möhs the "transport bird," for it is usually he who brings the orders for further deportations to the East.

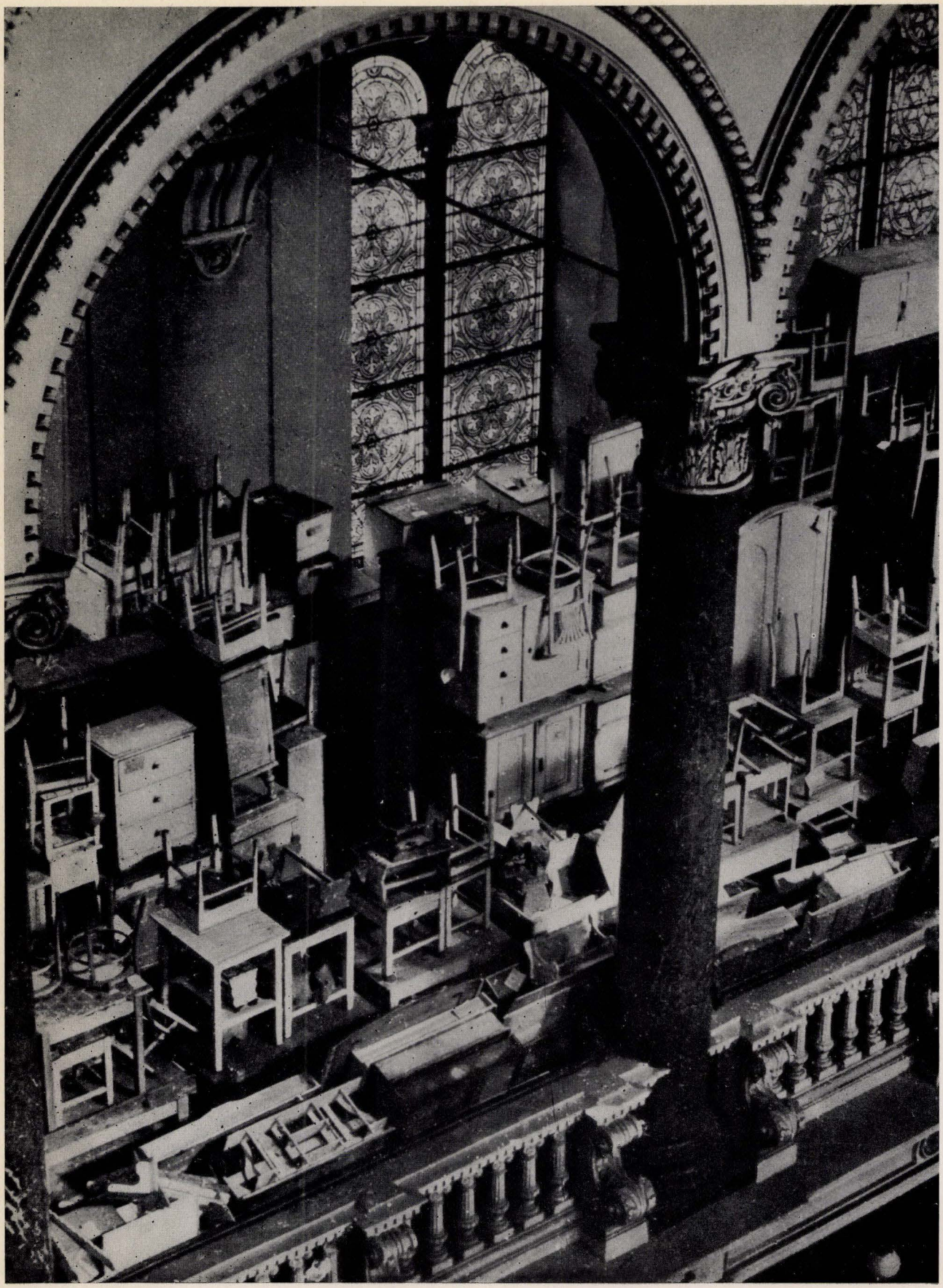
The Terezín Command is subordinated to the Prague Zentralstelle für Jüdische Auswanderung, employing a large staff of helpers. The head of the Zentralstelle is directly responsible to Adolf Eichmann, head of Department IV B 4 RSHA.

Tension develops in the course of time between the Prague Zentralstelle and its superior, the Berlin Central Office, which in turn influences events at the Terezín

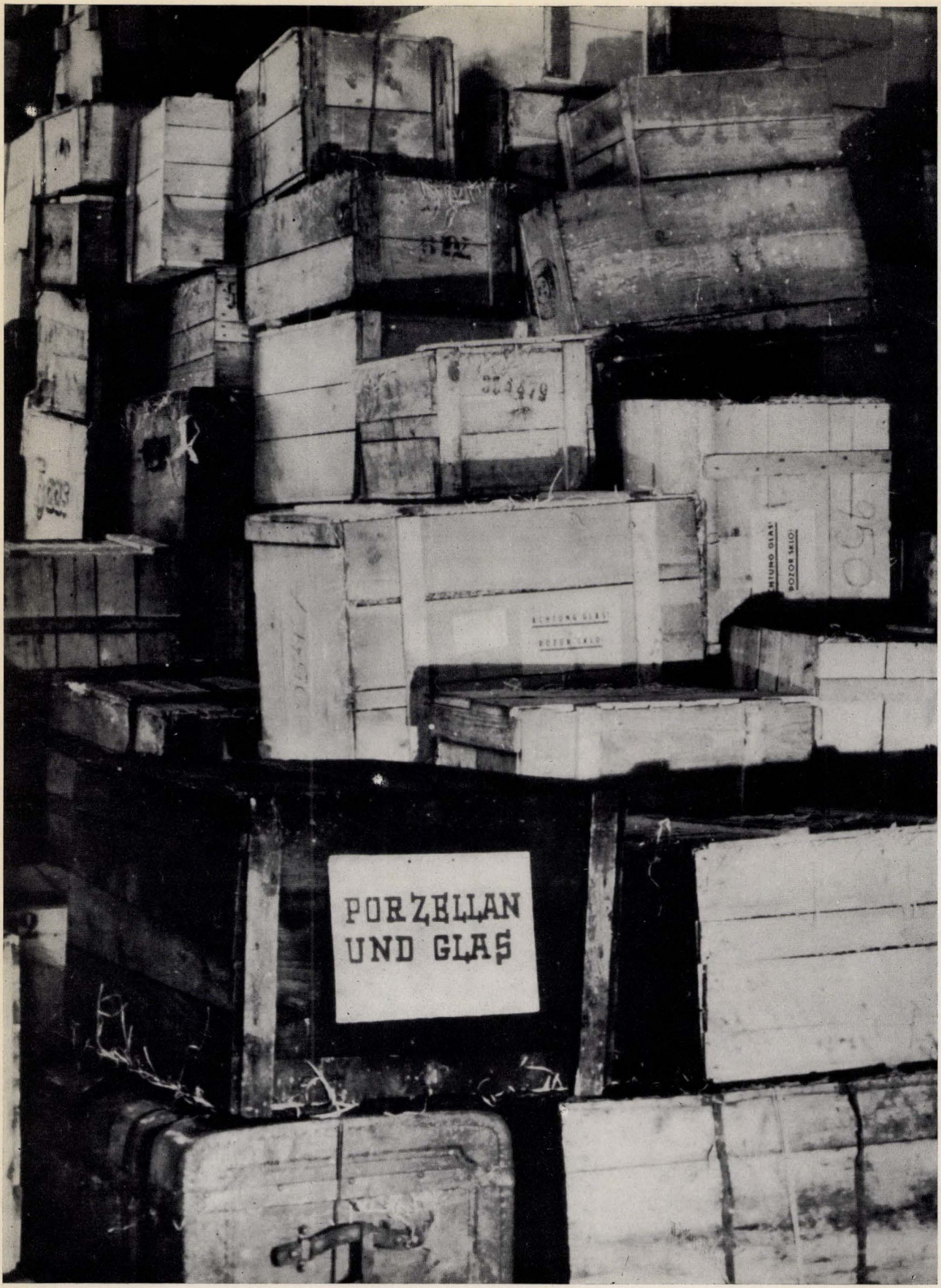


1 From Bohušovice station to the Ghetto (photo)

2, 3, 4 Property stolen from the Jews was stored by the Nazis in synagogues




Pokaler groß II
Pokaler groß III
Pokaler klein II


PORZELLAN
UND GLAS



5 From the fraudulent Nazi film about the Terezín Ghetto. Judenältester Dr. Eppstein and his assistant Dr. Murmelstein



6 The gates that usually only the dead could leave behind them (photo)



7 The gates that usually only the dead could leave behind them (Bedřich Fritta)



8 The sheep from the razed Lidice (ashot from the film "Transport from Paradise")

camp. Thus, even changes in the commanders occur. Seidl is incapable of adapting himself to the planned transformation of the concentration camp into a "ghetto for old people"—the Reich's old age pensioners' home for Jews—which the Nazis need to counterbalance the reports of bestial crimes taking place in the camps of the East, that are beginning to leak out abroad.

At the beginning of July he is therefore replaced by Anton Burger and this fanatic enemy of all things Czech comes to the Terezín camp, known for what he has done in Brno, for his beatings and his harsh persecution of any illegal contacts.

Burger's arrival puts an end to Edelstein's activity as Judenältester. Burger, in his fanatic hatred of the Czech, prefers to deal with Dr. Paul Eppstein, the representative of the Jews from the Reich, and only waits for an opportunity to eliminate Edelstein.

Burger begins his plans for improving the camp's appearance by ordering a change in street names. He has all numbers and letters marking blocks and streets removed, and the streets receive sophisticated names such as Seestrasse, Parkstrasse, Badstrasse, Bergstrasse, and so on. This is important when the prisoners write letters abroad, where people might be made to believe that there is a lake, a park, a spa, or mountain, at Terezín.

Several SS-officers arrive in July to inspect the town and the "ghetto." They choose one barracks which is to become the last hiding place for the RSHA archives. This has unfortunate results for the prisoners, because the command orders premises in which over 6400 prisoners live to be cleared within 36 hours. And thus these people move in panic haste with all the things that belong to their lives: bunks, straw mattresses, kitchens, sick bays, stores. As always, this mad rush is senseless, for the buildings stand empty for three weeks before the files and registers of Nazi crimes are stored there, safe from possible air attacks. The clerks working in these archives, together with their families, are lodged in special buildings, separated from the "ghetto" by a high wooden fence and a bridge.

Not only the barracks attics, but also the attics of all houses are now occupied because of lack of space. Every corner of every house from cellar to roof is taken.

A sad sight awaits the prisoners towards the end of the second period of the Terezín camp. A train arrives at the ghetto bringing nearly 1300 children aged from six to fifteen years. Nobody is allowed out in the streets, nobody is allowed to talk to the children. Closely guarded by the sentries and the SS, the children walk in a straggling procession, barefoot or in old boots, clad in rags, dirty, nothing but bags of skin and bone, to the de-lousing station. They are terrified, none of them utters a word, none of them smiles, but when they see the notice board with the word "gas" before the de-lousing station, they cling to each other, begin to cry and refuse to enter. They evidently have some experience with gas from the East. But finally they are all bathed and furtively and in secret they tell some of the members of the disinfection group of their fate. At Bialystok the SS-Mordkommando has shot their mothers and fathers before their eyes. Some men, women and children died in the gas chambers. The remaining children were dragged off to Terezín. Nobody knows how many there are of these poor orphans, nobody is allowed to count them, the children are lodged in houses surrounded by barbed wire. Several score

succumb to contagious diseases, are taken to the Small Fortress by the SS-men and beaten to death.
The children's transport from Bialystok is the last transport to arrive at the "ghetto" during this period. Thus ends the second period in the history of Terezín.

JEWISH SETTLEMENT

September 1943-September 1944

The clearing of several large blocks results in the "ghetto" being crowded with prisoners. But the SS know a way out, they order 5000 people to leave their temporary abode. According to orders these people must be from Bohemia and Moravia and not older than 65 years.

When the transport lists are being drawn up it is necessary to choose 5,000 persons, plus 1,000 as substitutes, out of about 12,800 prisoners from Bohemia and Moravia, after the exclusion of all those that are protected from the fate of being sent East. This means that, as usual, every other prisoner is threatened.

Burger uses the tense atmosphere called forth by the transport under preparation to do away with the long-existing privileges of some groups. He includes in the transport the closest assistant of the former Judenältester Edelstein and selects many prisoners from the two Aufbaukommandos. Fearing possible resistance from the Terezín ghetto guard, Burger dissolves this group and some members of the Ghetto Wache are also sent East. Thus, on September 6, during one single day, 5,000 prisoners from Bohemia and Moravia leave the camp and nobody realizes what is the fate that awaits them.

A month later the children's transport trom Bialystok also leaves the "ghetto". About 50 nurses and doctors accompany them, all of them disappearing without a trace.

Another national group appears in the Terezín camp at the beginning of October– Jews from Denmark. They arrive without stars on their chest, continue smoking undisturbedly and the SS-men, in contrast to their usual custom, enter into lively conversation with them. They are given postcards and write home that their reception was pleasant. Then they are led away and everything they have brought with them is confiscated. Nevertheless, their position in the camp remains rather more privileged, and they often receive valuable food parcels from home.

November 9 is a fateful day for Edelstein. On that day he is taken to the bunker together with three other employees of the prison registry, and all of them are accused of falsifying the daily reports concerning the number of prisoners and aiding in the escape of 55 persons from the camp. Burger has got rid of Edelstein and this affair has terrible consequences for the camp.

The SS orders the counting of prisoners for November 11. Forty thousand people are driven out in the early morning, the weather is damp and cold, and they are left to stand in the drizzling rain on the wet grass, without food and drink, until

the late hours of the night, without their correct number being ascertained. The entire valley is surrounded by gendarmes armed with machine-guns, and a plane circles over the prison. Panic breaks out in the dark and nobody gives the order to return. Mothers try to protect their children from being crushed to death, old people sink to the ground with weariness and hunger, all stumble about, here and there, desperately trying to get back to the camp they have cursed so often. At midnight the plain is empty, but for the old people helplessly lying on the ground until they are carried back to the camp. Nearly 300 persons pay with their lives for this senseless census.

The number of prisoners, however, has not been ascertained. The census is therefore repeated in the following weeks according to the identity cards. But November 11, 1943, will long be remembered by the Terezín prisoners.

The first signs appear in December, indicating the phantasm of a normal town to be called up for presentation to the international commissions.

There are still too many people, however, living in unsuitable lodgings, for the town to be beautified. This makes a bad impression and the SS have no difficulty in finding a solution—transport. Burger orders the departure of another 5,000 prisoners from Bohemia and Moravia, irrespective of age, and personally includes in the transport a large number of administrative workers, especially those from the Czech lands. This is his crowning effort in his fight against the Czechs. The first Terezín Judenältester Jacob Edelstein is also included among the 5,000, who leave Terezín on December 15th and 18th.

The year 1943 draws to an end. Over 15,000 prisoners have arrived at the camp during this year, 17,000 have left, nearly 13,000 lost their lives in the camp and 14 prisoners escaped. There are 34,600 prisoners left in the camp at the end of the year.

In the middle of January 1944 orders are suddenly issued for barracks housing 3,200 women to be cleared within 48 hours. Chaos reigns, as it did when buildings had to be cleared for the RSHA. The women move to attics and to the houses. Nobody knows what to expect. The building is disinfected and got ready for new victims arriving on January 20 and 27. They are again Dutch from the camp in Westerbork. They arrive in express train carriages, Dr. Eppstein, Jacob Edelstein's successor, delivers a welcoming address, the head of the Dutch group answers, the SS help the people to get out of the train and are kindness personified, all smiles and helpfulness. And everything is being filmed. Then the Dutch, just like the Danes before them, are given postcards and write home about their good reception and are then robbed of everything they have brought with them. They must hand over food, tobacco, valuables and all their money. Next day they become rank-and-file prisoners. This palaver is no longer repeated when further transports from Westerbork arrive.

Burger does not fully understand the changed intentions in the mission of the Terezín camp and is therefore recalled and replaced in February by SS OSTF Karl Rahm. Rahm is a choleric brute, who has killed at least two workers of the Prague Jewish Religious Community. But in spite of this, Edelstein used to say of him that he was a dog that barked rather than bit. He is sent to Terezín to play the "beautifying comedy" to the end. He sends many people to the Small Fortress

to be liquidated, and 200 prisoners for slave labour in the construction of houses in Zossen, Brandenburg.

Eppstein loses his safe position with Burger's departure, as the Austrian Rahm does not like Germans from the Reich. This is shown when Eppstein returns with a black eye from the Command, one day. No commander had ever done this before to any of the Judenältester. And thus Dr. Benjamin Murmelstein gains in importance, entrusted with carrying out the "beautifying campaigns," and he talks to Rahm in the Viennese dialect.

"Beautifying campaign" is a slogan setting the whole of Terezín in motion and to which everything else is being subordinated. Rahm completes the most grandiose fraud, in comparison to which Potemkin's villages were mere child's play: to improve the appearance of the camp in such a way as to please the expected visitors from the international commissions.

He starts with the Command, which is renamed "Dienstelle." He abolishes the title Lager inspector, prohibits the issuing of "Tagesbefehle," replacing them by graphically adorned "information from the Jewish Self Government." Terezín is no longer a camp or ghetto, but a "jüdisches Siedlungsgebiet," the "Ghetto-Wache" is no longer on guard at the barracks but the "Gemeinde-Wache," and the "Court of Law" is, instead of the "Ghetto-Gericht," the "Gemeindegericht."

He cancels the order that all uniformed persons must be saluted, prohibits the calling of "Achtung" and the standing at attention when visitors enter the prisoners' quarters. The park in the square is adjusted, grass is sown, beds of flowers are planted and concrete benches put up. A music pavilion is built in the corner of the square, and in another park a pavilion for small children containing a round-about, swings and small pool. Lawns appear at other points of the town and several sports grounds are installed, covering a large area. The houses are painted in light colours, inside and out, doors and window frames are painted, the "youth home" is reconstructed as well as the "bank," a social centre is set up, a stage is built for theatre performances, a library and a prayer house are established. Fences and barriers are taken down, the streets are paved and better lighting is installed.

The mortuary is put into order, a columbarium put up with small monuments that must have patina, a proper hearse is ordered for the transport of corpses.

White bed linen is issued to the hospital and clean uniforms to the nurses. A school is set up which nobody is allowed to enter. Only the inscriptions announce that the "boys and girls school" has "closed for the holidays." A house is built, containing a pleasant dining room with tables, tableclothes and cutlery, and with waitresses in white caps.

Wherever the commission is expected to set foot, there is whitewashing, painting, polishing, beautifying, in the flats of the Self-Government officials, in the offices, lodgings of the Danes, who receive special care. Pictures are put up and window curtains, flowers are put on the window-sills, ceiling lamps are installed and the usual kind of blond-wood furniture is brought, consisting of wardrobes, beds, night-tables, chairs. But this is only in those streets and at those places to be made accessible to the commission according to a previously prepared plan. Thus in the barracks only those corridors are whitewashed and cleaned along which the commission will pass; the others remain dirty and neglected.

Three-tier bunks have to be taken away, more room has to be made for prominent people and the Danes. Thus the density of the population increases for the sake of "the beauty of the town" and too many people are penned too closely together everywhere. Several thousand people are ordered to be sacrificed for the sake of "the beauty of the town." The command orders transports to the East. For the sake of the "beauty of the town" the orphans must disappear, for the sake of the "beauty of the town" all T.B.C. patients are eliminated. Three transports carry off 7,500 people. The camp commander interferes when lists for the last transport are drawn up. At the last moment he excludes young people that still look fairly well, chooses pretty girls, all with the intention of presenting them to the international commision. The lottery goes on for a whole night, during which Rahm decides on life and death. Loading drags out for the whole of the next day, there are not enough people for the transport, people hide and do not report, some of the reserves are included and finally the train leaves Terezín. That is the other side of the "beautifying campaign."

The commission arrives in the camp on June 23. It includes a representative of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Chairman of the Danish Red Cross and representatives of the International Red Cross in Berlin. They are accompanied by a staff of high Nazi officials from Berlin and Prague. The Terezín SS-men, except for the commander, are all in mufti.

Stage management is perfect: in the early morning the women have scrubbed the pavements over which the commission will pass. Scouts run ahead of the commission and at their command the "beautifying show" starts working. In one street the commission—"by chance"—meets a group of girls, marching with rakes shouldered, in another white-gloved bakers are unloading bread, at the communal centre, the orchestra is playing a Requiem and at the exact moment when the commission reaches the sports ground the ordered goal is shot before an audience that has been ordered to attend. In front of the "grocer's"—by chance—fresh vegetables are unloaded and waitresses serve an excellent lunch in the spotlessly clean house that has the dining room. Children are riding on the round-about, the "bank manager" is smoking a cigar and offers the visitors cigarettes. Nobody knows that this very same "bank manager" has recently been locked up in prison for three months because he was found smoking. Judenältester Eppstein—Mayor Eppstein for the day—in a black suit rides in a private car driven by one of the most cruel SS-men there is in the camp, who politely opens the door and bows to him. The "town band" is playing a military march in the square.

Fantastic lies were told to the members of the commission that day. And they never saw the old sick bays, they did not see the old people's home, they naturally did not see the underground bunkers, the transport department was closed, the transport lists well hidden, nor was the store stuffed full of stolen things shown. No old people, cripples, blind were to be seen anywhere—they were not allowed out into the streets that day, so as not to create a bad impression. The Czech gendarmes also had to disappear from the camp.

The visitors are leaving, but the programme has not yet been exhausted. Film people come to Terezín and the whole comedy is filmed. A stage is even put up on a meadow behind the town and several thousand prisoners attend a variety show.

Swimming baths are put up on the banks of the river Ohře and carefully chosen prisoners must demonstrate dives or sunbathe. After the shots have been taken, the swimming baths naturally disappear again. Life at the "café" is filmed, showing carefully chosen groups of people on the terrace, made up of several former ministers, high army officers, well-known scientists and professors. The "children's home" is filmed, the post-office delivering parcels, a football match. At the "bank," prisoners who have been commandeered are filmed as they deposit or withdraw money in Terezín banknotes.

The SS insist that the film should be quickly finished and the prisoners have forebodings that soon they will not be needed as involuntary actors and supers. The SS's behaviour indicates that something terrible is being got ready. All prisoners who were former officers in many armies are registered, all joint lodgings for groups of young workers are dissolved—all for fear of possible resistance. Many sudden searches are made, during one of which the works of Terezín painters showing the truth about the prisoners' lives are discovered. They are accused of hostile propaganda against the Reich and with their families sent to the Small Fortress for "liquidation."

September comes, a month that twice had been an ominous and disastrous one for Terezín. From smuggled newspapers and secret radio receivers the prisoners learn of events at the various fronts and feel that the defeat of the Nazi Wehrmacht might also mean their own end. At the end of September their fears come true. And the end of this month also finishes the third period in the history of the Terezín ghetto.

BREAK-UP AND LIBERATION

October 1944—May 1945

On September 23, the SS issue an order to dispatch two transports from Terezín of 2,500 men below the age of fifty each, to be sent on war work. Dresden is given as the destination and prisoners are only allowed light luggage and sufficient food for one day. Participants in the transport are promised good treatment for their families that are remaining behind at the camp. The order specifically states that the transport is being sent to a work camp, and that it is therefore necessary to include technicians and craftsmen, members of the guard and doctors.

To make illusion complete they do not permit the inclusion of previously punished prisoners or anti-social elements. They promise frequent contact with Terezín and constantly stress the work purpose of the transports and the Reich as destination.

The next day there is great excitement throughout the ghetto. The transports are being drawn up, the called-up men are waiting for their train at the meeting place, but the ghetto is shaken by another report, that of the arrest of Judenältester Eppstein. Rahm has long waited for an opportunity to get rid of Eppstein. And now it came, when he saw him on a road which was out of bounds for prisoners. Rahm does not care that Eppstein went there to comply with his order to get about 20 rucksacks for

the SS-Command from the stores beyond the road. Eppstein is accused of attempted escape, taken to the Small Fortress the very same day and shot. Administration is taken over by Dr. Benjamin Murmelstein, who thus becomes the third and last Judenältester.

On September 28 the prisoners board the train, 70 to 90 per car. Rahm and Haindl are present, beating and chasing the prisoners and making them hurry. Otto Zucker leaves with the transport as the "manager of the work camp" and Karel Schliesser as the "administrative manager." Another transport leaves the next day, bringing the total up to four thousand persons. Another thousand are waiting for their call-up, which comes the same day. But on the same day the SS publish a circular permitting a limited number of family members of those that have already left to join this transport.

And the people believe them again—many women apply to be included without realizing that they are going to their certain death. Nearly five hundred of them leave to share their husbands' fate.

Then orders for another transport come where all family members of those that have left must be included.

After the departure of each transport the prisoners hope that it was the last, but the Nazis give them no peace. Another transport is ordered for October 6 and after that there is no end to them. The Nazis are so sure that the prisoners are unaware of their destination, and that they still believe what they are being told, that they threaten those who do not join their transport or try to avoid it in some way with sending them to a concentration camp!

All protection from deportation, except for a few exceptions, is abolished, and the SS make their own selection for further transports. The prisoners are called before the camp commander and he determines who is to go and who to stay behind. Only the Danes remain, some Dutchmen, women working in the splitting of mica, some experts of the Self-Government and people over 65 years old. The SS include "political suspects" in every transport, leading members of the Self-Government, and all who are inconvenient to the Nazis because they know too much. Even the doctors go, accompanying the sick that are carried to the trains on stretchers.

Transports take possession of the camp. Nobody is sure of escaping deportation. The few people to be exempted must be decided on by Möhs as well as Rahm. The gendarmes stand by in readiness to prevent possible resistance.

Every time a transport has left the people still hope that that was the last of all deportations, that the five hundred people forming reserves will go "home," but the barracks remain locked up, and again and again call-up papers are distributed, night and day, without end. People no longer go to bed because nobody can fall asleep anyway. Everything disintegrates, nobody is interested in anything, only transports loom in everybody's mind. Night changes into day, nerves are tensed to breaking point, there is only hope and despair, waiting, desperate waiting. Lodgings are empty, remnants of left-behind property lie about everywhere that nobody can be bothered with.

The transports rage in Terezín the whole of October. On October 28, members of the Council of Elders with their families are included, a total of seventy persons for whom the last two carriages of the train have been set aside on their last journey.

Twenty men in a special carriage leave together with them, personally chosen by Rahm and Haindl during the loading of the train. This carriage is uncoupled at the next stop on the main line and the twenty men are to cover up all traces of the Nazi crimes. First they pour the ashes from the 25,000 urns of the cremated Terezín prisoners into mine pits or the river, then they must dig up the corpses of sixteen executed persons and place them in coffins, which are then cremated. After they have finished their work they are beaten to death at the Small Fortress, for they are inconvenient witnesses.

Suddenly all transports stop. Before they started, there were 29,500 people in the camp, when they finished, there remained only 11,100. Children up to 15 years of age were also included in the transports, more than half of all the deported were people from Bohemia and Moravia. Only a few of those who remain behind, are unaffected by the death transports. Old people remain, whose grown-up children have left, widows remain, whose husbands died in camp and whose children and grand-children have now left them. Children remain without their mothers and mothers without their children.

This is why nobody feels any sense of relief when transports stop. People are too depressed and miserable. Only a few hundred men fit for work are left behind in the ghetto, work is at a standstill, nobody carts away refuse, there is nobody to look after the old people, there is nobody to cook. But the Nazis refuse to slow down the tempo of work. As if nothing had happened, a dining room is established for them, a canteen and a cinema. Women take the place of men everywhere, a group of women even see to freight handling and move heavy loads. Slowly the camp starts functioning again, but nobody knows what is in store for them, what the Nazis intend to do with the remaining prisoners.

During this period the Nazis concentrate their main attention on eliminating all traces of their crimes: first they order the 22,000 urns with the ashes of the deceased victims sent away. Women and children form a chain and pass the urns from hand to hand onto the trailers. The trailers leave and nobody has the slightest inkling that the twenty prisoners kept back from the last transport finish the work. The graves of the buried are levelled with the ground so that their number can no longer be ascertained.

At the same time it seems that the SS are considering whether it would not be possible to use once again all the equipment from the time of the "beautifying campaign" for further propaganda. This intention is proved by a visit of SS-officers from Berlin and Prague, who closely inspect the whole camp in December. And again nobody knows what to expect.

A new Council of Elders is appointed in December. Dr. Murmelstein is Judenältester and every national group has one representative. Slowly the administration also starts functioning. There is improvement in the food supply, for prisoners receive food from the parcels addressed to those who have already left and from Red Cross consignments.

Slovaks arrive in the camp at the end of December, and with them the first reports of murder by gas in Auschwitz. Even now the Terezín prisoners show no inclination to believe what they hear. The year 1944 draws to its close. Over 7,400 prisoners have arrived in the camp during this year, nearly 26,000 have been sent East and

over 4,500 have perished in the camp. Nine prisoners have escaped. On the last day of the year there are not quite 11,500 prisoners in the camp.

In the middle of January orders come from the command for ten wooden houses to be built. Nobody knows what for, since there is now plenty of room in the camp and the feverish hurry to which the SS forces the prisoners during the work is inexplicable. The houses must have their own sanitary facilities, are surrounded by barbed wire, their windows only face the yard and a sentry box is put up at the only entrance leading to them.

On the last day of January a new and larger transport arrives in the camp, the first after some time. In February and March a few others follow from Prague, Ostrava and Olomouc with a total of more than 3,600 persons. These are Jews from so-called mixed marriages who had not been deported so far but had been working in some work camps in the "Protectorate" and in the Reich. Transports must undergo close search at the assembly place, and, with the aid of the SS, the passengers are cleaned out of everything they possess.

The Great German Reich is collapsing under the blows of the attacking armies, but the SS continues to deport the Jews to Terezín. Some concentration camps have already been liberated, but German thoroughness knows no bounds—groups of Jews or individuals arrive daily from places that have in the meantime been liberated by the allied armies. A few days after the occupation of Vienna several score of Hungarians arrive from Austria.

With the approaching end of the war friction arises among the Nazis: one part tries to get some kind of alibi by eliminating all traces of past crimes, repopulating the ghetto and keeping alive all "beautifying" installations. The other part is for a complete extermination of all the Jews in accordance with Hitler's plan. The hidden struggle of these two groups continues throughout February and March and the entire spring of 1945 in the camp is marked by these two tendencies—to preserve the ghetto or to exterminate the prisoners to the last man.

The first tendency is confirmed at the beginning of February by an order to dispatch a transport of 1,200 persons from Terezín with Switzerland as its alleged destination. Very few people believe that this is really going to be a transport to a neutral country, they have had too many bad experiences and have been misled too often. Only people in good physical condition may be included in the transport, no relatives of those that have been sent East, nor Danes, Slovaks or sick people. Rahm in person chooses individuals, sees to it that they are well supplied with good food and decent-looking luggage—without transport numbers—and orders express passenger carriages for them. Everybody has a seat in the train, the SS help old people to board it, hand in their luggage and are all kindness. The transport leaves. When, after a few days, letters arrive from Switzerland, people finally believe that 1,200 of their fellows are actually free. The atmosphere in the camp improves, for people begin to feel that perhaps somewhere there is still somebody who has not quite forgotten them, even during the last hours of the war.

The other tendency is expressed by the mysterious construction work the SS orders to be carried out in the underground passages of the Terezín Fortress. Openings in the walls of the passages are bricked up and a few ventilators are fixed near the

ceiling. The SS-men in person supervise the work and report progress to a commission that comes specially to the camp.
Another passage in the Terezín Fortress is walled up by a six-metre-high wall, so that only a narrow entrance is left.
There is much conjecture among the prisoners as to what the purpose of these installations might be. As work proceeds they get more and more disquieted. But when orders come to prepare an iron grille and air-tight doors, everything is clear at once to the technicians: a gas chamber is to be installed in one passage, in the other the prisoners may be herded together and shot down from above. Suspicion grows still further when Rahm forbids the issuing of hydrogen cyanide for disinfection, locks the store and takes away the key.
The technicians tell their suspicions to Murmelstein and he, in turn passes them on to Rahm. The camp commander denies the real purpose of the two structures and insists that one is to serve as a food store and the other as a duck farm.
Eichmann arrives in the camp at the beginning of March to ascertain whether Terezín may still be shown to the International Commission. Work in both passages is stopped.
In the meantime discussions take place behind the scenes between high Nazi officials and the International Red Cross that has asked for permission to inspect the Terezín camp. The Nazis delay their decision as long as they can to gain time for carrying out another "beautifying campaign" and to eliminate all traces of the past.
First of all, the written records of transports, all documents and statistics are taken away and burnt. Then there is a check on the suitability of all pictures and drawings the prisoners have put up in their lodgings, workshops and other places of work and all pictures in any way prejudicial to the Nazis are destroyed.
Special care is given to the cemetery. The remaining ashes are placed in stone urns, small monuments are put up and prisoners working there must learn by heart incorrect information on the number of dead.
Again the prisoners' quarters are white-washed, as well as the house fronts and the barracks, parks are laid out, the kitchens cleaned, the "café" is re-established, the theatre stage and the prayer house. The Council of Elders is allotted suitable offices in a good-looking house on the square, with carpets and telephone.
The still empty wooden camp is fitted with beds and hair mattresses, curtains are put up and flowers placed in the windows. Again, nobody can understand how the SS with all their cunning can be so unbelievably naive. They even hand out food from International Red Cross parcels to the prisoners and the kitchen rations are increased from food parcels brought to the camp in four cars by the Swiss representatives of the International Red Cross.
Towards the end of the first week in April, Paul Dunant, the representative of the International Red Cross arrives at the camp, surveys all the faked "beauty", listens to many lies and, greatly satisfied, leaves the camp on the very same day. The prisoners still live in uncertainty, but the Great German Reich crumbles at all corners and the sequence of events indicates the approaching debacle.
The SS also feel the end of their reign nearing. They destroy by fire their extensive Berlin archives that were temporarily secreted away in Terezín, as well as the acts of the Terezín command.

The entire staff that for three years has tortured and destroyed the prisoners of Terezín is getting ready for flight. And the prisoners must provide clothes and shoes for the journey, luggage, a field kitchen and utensils. All animals of the Terezín SS farm are slaughtered to supply meat to the fleeing Nazis. First, the workers of the RSHA and their families leave, well equipped with stolen things and food. But the SS-men of the Terezín command stay on. The end has not yet come.

There is a new sensation in the second week of April: news spreads like wildfire through the camp, that the Danes will be allowed to go home. And indeed, on April 15 there appear, as if coming from another world, luxuriously fitted white motor coaches and Swedish guides in white uniforms. They hand out food and cigarettes to the prisoners, completely ignoring the SS. The Danes are beside themselves with joy, they take leave of their friends, watched by Günther who has specially come from Prague. The Swedes do not even let Haindl have a look at the interior of the coaches and their contempt is absolute. The prison orchestra plays for the departing Danes on their way and the SS do not object. The square is full of people and there is much ado about leave taking.

But still the end has not come. The SS still try to find a pretext for the liquidation of all those that have survived the last wave of deportation. In the night of April 17, a number of leaflets are found in the camp, proclaiming the end of the war and stating that the ghetto would as soon as possible be put under the protection of the International Red Cross. The news spreads through the camp, prisoners run into the streets cheering and singing, embracing and dancing and starting to pack up their things. A few sober-minded people go and wake Murmelstein who tries to calm the prisoners down. On his way he already meets the SS, machine-gun in hand, on their way to suppress the mutiny. Murmelstein walks in front of them, hands up, right to the town houses, the centre of the "mutiny." On the way he tries to calm down Rahm, to explain the psychosis of the prisoners and the influence of recent events. He guarantees to renew order. Rahm orders all the men from the houses to fall in line, stands facing them with his own gang, machine-gun in hand. Silence reigns and everybody waits for what is to come. Rahm, his legs planted wide apart in the SS-manner, starts to speak and his first words indicate that the prisoners have won. He addresses them with the unheard-of words: "Meine Herren!" He speaks of the prison psychosis, using the same expressions he has heard Murmelstein using a few minutes ago. He asks—he actually asks—them to keep peace and order, prophesies an early end of the war and their return home. His companions are evidently dissatisfied with this turn of events, for they were burning to use their weapons. But Rahm orders about face and they all depart. However, this put-up job of a "mutiny" is not the last attempt on the part of the Nazis to destroy the prisoners.

On April 19, orders come to assemble a transport of six hundred well-known prisoners, and a few days later an artisans' transport is ordered. Destination for the first transport is given as a neutral country, for the second, work in the Reich. This time the prisoners, after their experiences with the transport to Switzerland, are willing to believe what they are told and there are few objections towards being included. The railway cars are already prepared, but suddenly the prisoners hear

of strict orders not to mention the transports before Dunant, should he by chance visit Terezín. Furthermore, that fool Haindl makes a slip by saying that both transports will leave by the same train. Finally a way is found to inform Dunant secretly, and he prevents deportation. The transport of prominent people—as it was later found—was destined to go to some camp in Austria, where they were to serve the Nazis as hostages in future negotiations. The artisans were destined for work at the camp.

The second attempt at liquidating the prisoners, however, has bitter consequences. Throughout the first months of 1945, groups of prisoners from concentration camps, that are cleared out in panic haste before the advancing armies, straggle all over Germany.

Columns of these completely emaciated, unfortunate people, stagger through Germany, are transported in open or sealed freight cars, without food and water. Whoever cannot go on during the march is shot down. In this way uniformed SS guards drive them from camp to camp until, at the end of April, there is nowhere left to go.

And on April 20, 1945, a freight train brings about 2,000 persons to the Terezín camp, men and women, the first of all those transports that are now arriving at the camp day and night.

Those who arrive at the camp from Auschwitz and other such camps no longer look like human beings. Emaciated, dirty, lice-infested, covered with sores, rags instead of clothes and only one thought in their minds—food and drink.

The inmates of Terezín are filled with horror when they discover among the newcomers a few of those who had left the camp half a year before. The reports brought to Terezín by these unfortunate people, their description of the fate of the Terezín transports, reveal the cruel truth about "call-up for work," "privileged resettlement," reveal the truth about what Nazism, what Fascism really is.

The replies to inquiries after other friends are all the same, though each sounds different: gas, shot, died of hunger, air-raid, typhus, electric current, scores of deaths, each in a different form.

But they do not arrive only by trains. They come in hundreds on foot, on carts and trucks, and then they lie worn to death, on stretchers, on the grass, in the courtyards, everywhere. The deserted trucks are full of dirt and excrement, scores of corpses everywhere, and God knows for how long they have been lying there. Many non-Jewish prisoners come, criminal prisoners also, and Terezín no longer is a concentration camp for Jews.

The last blow that the Terezín SS have prepared hits hard. They know only too well that it is impossible to give their victims proper care in the camp, that there is not enough personnel at the de-lousing station, not enough medicaments, not enough food, not enough nursing staff.

The day following the arrival of the evacuation transports, Paul Dunant again arrives at the camp. He informs the Council of Elders that the International Red Cross will take the Terezín Camp under its care. The last SS-men are getting ready to leave the camp, but they still feel strong enough to refuse energetically to hand over to the thousands of new prisoners the empty barracks and houses. Therefore, the old Terezín prisoners are quickly moved to find separate space for

the prisoners from the evacuation transports. Contact between the old and new prisoners cannot be avoided. Thus contagious diseases spread, especially typhoid fever. The Nazis' plan has succeeded.

Although the entire health service of the ghetto, disinfection stations, volunteers, work day and night, it is not humanly possible to separate the sick from the healthy, those infested by lice from the clean. The epidemic spreads.

At the beginning of May the International Red Cross takes over the Terezín camp and the Small Fortress. Straggling units of the Nazi Wehrmacht pass outside the camp and shoot into the ghetto. On May 4 an auxiliary group of Czech doctors arrives and takes over the care of all prisoners in the Small Fortress. On the same day two houses are set on fire in the camp to cover up the escape of the Terezín SS-men fleeing in the following confusion. On May 5, Rahm, the Terezín commander, the last of the Terezín SS, flees.

Then the Czechoslovak flags go up on the masts and after 41 months the camp is free. Dr. Benjamin Murmelstein ends his term of office as Judenältester and the liberated prisoners elect Jiří Vogel as the head of the free and truly independent Self-Government. On May 8 the cheering prisoners welcome the first Soviet tanks—at last they are really free. Soviet officers take charge of the camp and Paul Dunant departs.

But the typhus epidemic rages on. There are nearly 17,000 of the original prisoners in Terezín and about 13,000 persons from the evacuation transports, a total of about 30,000 people of thirty nationalities. Some escape from Terezín to return home, most of them to Prague. On May 14, about 3,700 persons leave Terezín. The struggle to control the typhus epidemic as well as the other contagious diseases is very difficult. There are not enough disinfectants, protective clothing, food. There are not enough workers, though many of them stay at their posts long after liberation. Some are infected just a few days before they are due to return home, dying after many days of self-sacrificing work.

The epidemic spreads, there are from 100 to 220 new cases daily, it is evident that without instant and effective help people will die, after having held out for so long.

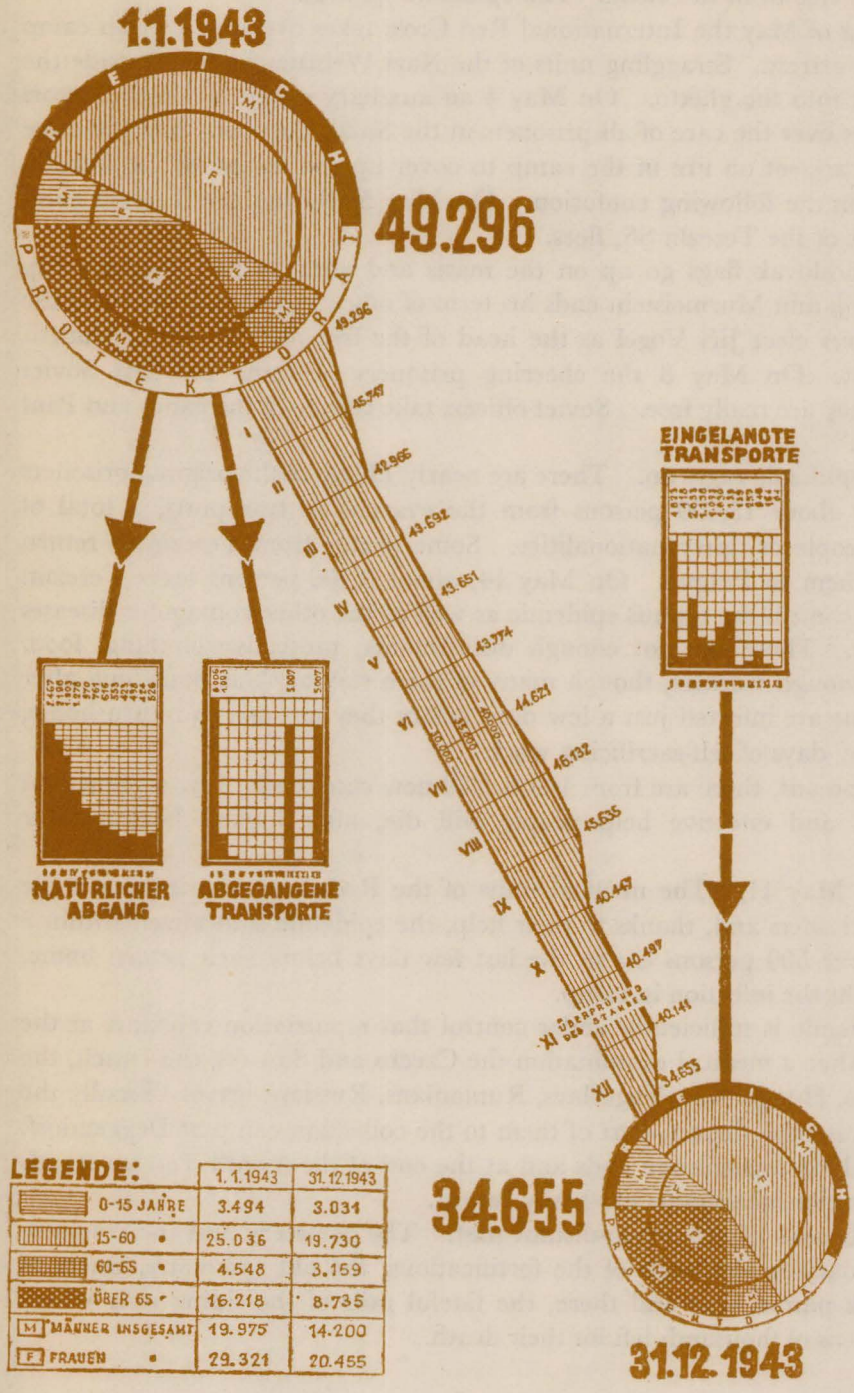
Help comes on May 11. The medical units of the Red Army work to save the remaining ex-prisoners and, thanks to their help, the epidemic is localized within a short time. Over 500 persons die in the last few days before their return home, 80 of them caught the infection in camp.

Finally the epidemic is sufficiently under control that repatriation can start at the end of May. After a medical examination the Czechs and Slovaks, the Dutch, the French, Belgians, Hungarians, Yugoslavs, Rumanians, Russians leave. Finally the Germans and Austrians depart, part of them to the collection camp at Deggendorf. On August 17, 1945 repatriation ends and at the end of the month Terezín stands empty. The former inhabitants gradually return.

Many signs still speak of the not-so-distant past. The cemetery and the crematorium, the mortuary in the walls of the fortifications, the old casemates, traces of street and block names here and there, the fateful rails of the siding over which thousands and tens of thousands left for their death.

JOSEF POLÁK

FACTS AND FIGURES



LEGENDE:	1.1.1943	31.12.1943
0-15 JAHRE	3.494	3.031
15-60 "	25.036	19.730
60-65 "	4.548	3.159
ÜBER 65 "	16.218	8.735
M MÄNNER INSGESAMT	19.975	14.200
F FRAUEN "	29.321	20.455

QUITE possibly German "Gründlichkeit" and systematic paperwork never celebrated a greater triumph than in the concentration camp of Terezín. The fiction of life in the camp was expressed, among other things, by a number of unnecessary "offices" that only made the prisoners' lives more difficult, to create the illusion of normality. The reason for this was that it provided jobs for the SS-men who did not want to go to the front, since the "fight against the internal enemy" was more profitable and certainly less risky.

This is why from time to time—usually when people were being recruited for the front—they carried out extensive registrations, to show that they were quite indispensable in the rear. They required an excessive number of detailed statistics, graphs, surveys and reports. This in turn made necessary a very large administrative staff dealing with the solution of the Jewish question not only in Prague but also at the Terezín camp.

Nobody will ever be able to count up how many files and registers one person suffering under racial persecution was registered in, during the Nazi occupation. In Terezín alone, every prisoner was entered in at least seventeen files and registers. The best artists were occupied in drawing monthly and yearly surveys, plans, statistics, graphs for the SS-Command, that they had to decorate with illustrations. Daily, weekly, monthly, all sorts of information had to be submitted to the SS-Command at regularly fixed intervals.

Besides the unnecessary and valueless registers and statistics concerning the "Bank" and its wage scales and turnover, the "Court of Law" with its surveys of testators' estates, the "Labour Office" and its records of hours worked, the "Financial Department" with a number of fictitious surveys, there was one register containing statistics and information, carefully recorded throughout the existence of Terezín, which today offers valuable evidence.

These are facts and figures concerning the number of deported arriving at and leaving the camp, classifications of prisoners according to nationality and age, the number of men, women and children, the daily number of prisoners, the number of deaths, births, suicides, the number of prisoners classified according to religion, the number and categories of those protected from deportation to the East, the daily numbers of sick and working, area of "inhabited" space according to the purposes it was used for, the maximum number of prisoners in the various barracks and blocks, much technical information and many other things.

I obtained these figures from the very first days of the Terezín camp. I immediately realized their importance and their possible value later on as evidence. I started to collect all the valuable information that was available and I was fortunate enough to be able to hide it for the whole time the camp existed, nearly 42 months, walled into the ceiling of a cubby-hole, after having previously changed its hiding place many times.

Twice fate was on my side in this work. When the first Terezín Judenältester Jacob Edelstein and three workers from the central registry office (Faltin, Deutsch and Goldschmied) were accused of "sabotage and falsification of the daily number of prisoners by 55 persons" and shot, I became the successor to Alfred Goldschmied, who had been engaged in drawing up the daily total number of prisoners in the camp. Everyone will understand that this was not a tempting position, and Goldschmied's

and the others' fate had clearly shown that any mistake in the reports had to be paid for with one's life. I did not realize that too clearly at the time, but I was glad that I was at the source of my activities. The main part of our work began after midnight, because it was necessary to wait till then for the arrival or departure of transports, but most of all for the number of dead.

Thus I had access to many figures and papers of the central registry. Fate was on my side for the second time during the last months of the Terezín camp's existence: I became the "supervisor" of the archives. That was a large room in which, on the orders of the Camp Command, all written material from all the departments of the self-governing body was assembled, dated November 1941 to December 31, 1944. The first thing I did when I looked through the stored material was to take possession of all transport lists of prisoners from Bohemia and Moravia. I further hid safely away transport lists of prisoners deported to the East from the Terezín camp. These formed two large parcels, one consisting of 122 volumes and 73,608 names and the other of 63 volumes and 86,934 names.

I had also the lists of prisoners from Germany, Austria, Holland and Denmark ready for hiding, but I was caught out by SS-Obersturmführer Bergel, the camp inspector. He suddenly came to the barracks one day, locked the archives and sealed them. That was at the time when the Berlin Nazis burnt all their documents from the RSHA archives in an empty water reservoir that had been used for fire fighting, in the court yard of the "Sudeten" barracks. For several days and nights the evidence of Nazi crimes burned there. The pungent smell of the smoke hung over the camp for days, and pieces of half-burnt paper flew about. The Terezín Camp Command also destroyed all its written material.

And one day trucks with trailers came and a work group of prisoners under Bergel's supervision had to load the entire archives into them and take them away to be burnt. When the parcels of documents were carried out, Bergel was sitting at the door of the archives in a small wheelchair. I do not know how that chair had got into the archives. But it was not a bad sight in April 1945 to see the feared camp inspector sitting in the wheelchair. It looked as if Bergel was dozing.

And so I decided that I would help, and in doing so try to carry out the remaining lists of foreign prisoners and store them safely away. To test whether Bergel would notice me, the "supervisor" of the archives, I first took three parcels of clean second-sheet paper that had been stored by chance in the archives. When I passed with the paper in my arms Bergel suddenly came to life, caught my hand and sharply asked what I was carrying. When I explained that I was taking out unused second-sheet paper to prevent it from being destroyed, he let me go. I did not dare after that to carry away the remaining transport lists of German and other prisoners. And so it happened that these lists were not saved. The entire archives with many pictures and drawings were gradually loaded onto several trucks and taken away to be destroyed.

During the next few days the SS-men made random checks of all rooms, and woe unto those where any paper was found that should have been handed in and destroyed.

During one such search in the central registry Bergel nervously drummed his finger on one cupboard against which he was leaning, and it was in that very cupboard that

the most valuable of all statistics were hidden away in its double top. At one time some of the things were hidden in the nave of the Terezín church and in the framework of the tower. I used to go there with Jiří Dörfler, whose task it was, besides working at the bakery, to wind the tower clock. We had a small radio station in the tower.

The preservation of the transport lists enabled us to draw up extensive files of the prisoners and ascertain their fate. The numerical material has also often yielded valuable information.

Many people still distort reality by giving incorrect figures in their writings about the Terezín camp. When publishing such information it must be realized that the numerous statistics were *intentionally distorted* by the Nazi Camp Command, and that they therefore do not offer a true picture of life in the camp. Such mistakes are even committed by people who consider themselves experts on the conditions that reigned in Terezín. Incorrect figures are published both in our country and abroad.

But there exists much numerical information that has not been published so far and whose importance we do not even realize.

Does anybody still know, for instance, that every day the number of children up to two years of age had to be reported to the Nazi Command? That they had to be strictly registered, and that as soon as they reached their second birthday they were transferred to the number of men or women?

Does anybody still remember that the maximum number of prisoners in the "Sudeten" barracks shortly before their evacuation on July 23, 1943, was 4,879 men? And that in that one Terezín building alone nearly two thousand people more were herded together than the *whole of Terezín* housed before the war in 219 houses? That the situation was the same in the other barracks, for instance on September 19, 1942, there were 4,346 persons in the "Hamburg" barracks, 4,722 in the "Dresden" block, etc.

And is it not illustrative enough if I say that, in 1943, 159 out of every 10,000 prisoners died of tuberculosis? And that this was *fifty-six times higher* than the mortality rate in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic today?

Is it not an interesting fact that out of the 207 children born in the Terezín camp during the time of its existence, 43 were conceived in the camp? And that only 25 of all the children born there lived to see liberation? And who still knows today that each of the children born in the camp received a transport number at birth?

It is also worth noticing information on the prisoners' religions. It is not without interest to note that on December 31, 1944, for instance, out of 11,474 prisoners 3,112 were non-Jews (943 Catholics, 1,198 Protestants, 139 other sects, 832 without membership in any religious community). And on May 1, 1945, of 17,515 prisoners 6,294 were non-Jews, not counting the prisoners from the evacuation transports.

It is generally known today that the highest number of prisoners was reached on September 18, 1942, amounting to 58,491 persons. The number of deaths also reached a maximum that day: 156 within 24 hours. But is it not a better indication of the desperate situation in the camp that during that month an average of 38,912 persons were unfit for work and only 7,643 men and 7,748 women were capable of

work? And if we were to make an analysis of their classification according to work the situation would become even clearer. Is not this catastrophic autumn illustrated by the fact that the dead included 23 babies under one year of age and 27 children between 1 and 10?

Is it not of interest to know that 18,402 prisoners, dragged away in liquidation transports in September and October 1944, remained on the Terezín list of prisoners up to November 1, 1944, only to be crossed off that day together with Dr. Paul Eppstein, the second Terezín Judenältester, who had been dead for a long time? And that this was one of the many of the SS-deceits: to create the impression that this was only a "work camp" of the same kind as the work commands at Kladno, Motyčín, Dubá, Oslavany, Křivoklát, Budějovice, Panenské Břežany or Zessen. Nor is it quite beyond doubt that the SS-men made fat profits the whole month out of the higher number of prisoners. It is also interesting that classification of liquidation transports according to nationality has shown that nearly half (9,173) were made up of comparatively young prisoners from Bohemia and Moravia. And does this not indicate, after the experiences of the Warsaw ghetto, the SS-men's fear of resistance from those very Czech prisoners in the last months of Nazi rule?

Is it not shattering to know that, in the September and December transports of the year 1943 and the May transports of 1944 from Terezín to the East, there were 1411 children under fifteen years of age? Classification of the prisoners by age in the various periods and the number of those protected from deportation to the East shows more than anything else, how desperate a struggle was waged during the preparation of every transport for every minute of human life.

Many more figures speak of insufficient boilers for cooking, shortage of water, electricity, lavatories, the number of cases of contagious diseases and other illnesses. The processing of these facts and figures has made it possible to draw up reliable material for the work of the historians.

It is time to put an end to incorrect information about the Terezín camp, which only distorts the truth about the prisoners' life there. The Nazis' liking for figures and records has turned against them. The figures that enabled them with inborn thoroughness and passion to count people, like items of inventory, to register their nationality, sex, age, capacity to work and religion before they exterminated them, gives evidence today of the monstrosity of Nazi crimes, the darkest period in human history.

CHAPTER II

RELIGIOUS LIFE IN TEREZÍN

RELIGIOUS LIFE IN TEREZÍN

HOW I OFFICIATED AT THE MOST FESTIVE WEDDING CEREMONY IN TEREZÍN

MY FIRST WEDDING CEREMONY AS RABBI IN TEREZÍN Dr. Richard Feder

...Look and see
if there is any sorrow like my sorrow
which was brought upon me... Lamentations 1 : 12

Dr. RICHARD FEDER

RELIGIOUS LIFE IN TEREZÍN



SINCE the Nazis had prohibited shechita and forbade Jews to hold public religious services, religious life in the Czech lands suffered greatly, but certainly did not disappear completely. Although the Nazis had robbed the Jews of much, they could not deprive them of their God. Even Jews who were not religious were deeply offended, as they realized that this was only one more attempt on the part of the Nazis to humiliate and abase us. In Terezín the German Command was more tolerant.

It is true that they did not explicitly permit services but, on the other hand, they did not explicitly forbid them either. They simply looked on, as the Jews under the guidance of their Council of Elders set up prayer houses and established regular services, and they had detailed reports that the older people were regularly attending. During the first half of 1942, prayer houses were set up in the Terezín quarters "Magdeburg," "Kavalír," "Podmokly," in the former barracks of a sappers' regiment and, if I am not mistaken, in "Sudeten." There was a great shortage of suitable rooms. None were to be had in "Hamburg" and "Hannover," even though the housing office was willing to help, and so there they were set up in the attic where it was terribly cold in winter and stiflingly hot in summer. But our people endured this. These rooms, however, were not easily accessible for the old people and it happened more than once that they asked to be carried there. Many of these prayer rooms served simultaneously as lecture and concert halls and theatres. This could not be helped. The Jewish community of Brno sent benches from one synagogue to Terezín, which sufficed for several prayer rooms there. And they made the congregation feel more at home.

When several rabbis had arrived at Terezín, Mr. Edelstein, the chairman of the Council of Elders, appointed the conservative Zikmund Unger of Brno Chief Rabbi, Erich Weiner of Plzeň and Vojtěch Schön of Brno his assistants and so there was now, indeed "beth din." It was not officially recognized, however, and was incorporated into the work team dealing with funerals—"Beerdigungswesen."

In the course of time many rabbis and cantors were "welcomed" to Terezín. In addition to the above-mentioned there were: Dr. Ferda from Budějovice, Dr. Spitzer from Františkovy Lázně, Dr. Feuerstein from Falknov, Dr. Stössler from Ústí on the Elbe, Dr. Hirsch from Prostějov, Dr. Schulsinger from Hodonín, Dr. Bass from Moravská Ostrava, Dr. Friedmann from Pardubice, Dr. Nürnberger from Uherský Brod, Dr. Oppenheim from Olomouc, Presser from Tábor, Rabinovič from Pacov, Löwy from Luže, Hoch from Klatovy, Gottschall from Louny and I myself from Kolín. From Prague had also come the deputy of the Chief Rabbi Dr. Aladar Deutsch, who was very ill, Dr. Kraus, Knöpfelmacher and Schrecker. There were also Dr. Salomonski from Berlin, Dr. Neuhaus from Frankfurt on Maine and Dr. Friediger from Kopenhagen. Later on, Dr. Leo Baeck arrived, who together with Dr. Neuhaus became a member of the Council of Elders. Among the cantors were Messrs, Goldring, Fried, Grünbaum from Smíchov, Alter from Brno, Hellmann from Mikulov, Herrmann, Weiss and many more, whose names I have forgotten.

Every prayer house was allotted one rabbi and one cantor. Services at Terezín were held in the usual way. Many Jewish communities had brought with them their Torah, Megillah, shofar, drinking cups and candelabra and some people had brought their prayer books, Haggadah, mahzorim, talis, tefillin, and tachrihim for their last

journey. But nobody was ever dressed in the shrouds after death, because in Terezín it was strictly prohibited to put any textiles whatsoever into the graves. The only thing we did not have was wine for kiddush. This could not be bought with life or money. So we had to replace it by black coffee which, however, was not worthy of that name either, being made of various substitutes.

A certain amount of competition grew up among the various prayer houses. The cantors sang and the rabbis preached their best, and it was not long before it was generally known where the singing and the sermon was best. Thus the prayer houses had greater or smaller attendance according to the reputation they had gained. I had my prayer house in "Hannover," the block I also lived in. It was in the attic. At the beginning, my congregation was exclusively Czech and I addressed them in Czech. But in Terezín everything underwent constant changes and after a year or so my congregation was mostly from Vienna and Berlin and I had to speak in German. My first cantor was Grünbaum from Smíchov, the second Hellmann from Mikulov and the third Balaban from Vienna. I lost all three of them as they were successively included in transports going East. Thanks to some members of the congregation, a very good choir was formed that often performed after the service as well. As rabbis we taught the children Scripture—behind locked doors—prepared the boys for bar mitzvah, visited the sick, performed marriage ceremonies and held lectures as part of our free-time activities, so-called "Freizeitgestaltung," as the Germans said. We even had a woman rabbi at Terezín, the first woman ever to graduate from the Berlin theological college. Chief Rabbi Unger did not recognize her in any official capacity, but she herself found a fine field of activity. She visited rooms where only women lived, spoke to them about Jewish history, interpreted Jewish holidays and customs to them, and the women were always glad to see her. They enjoyed listening to her and often they gave her a crust of bread in return for her efforts, which the woman rabbi always took to her old mother. I am sorry that I have forgotten her name and the date on which she left Terezín. Lectures by Rabbi Neuhaus and Rabbi Baeck were also very well liked.

In the summer of 1944 the Council of Elders organized extremely beautiful services in the large hall of the "Sokolovna" block. The cantors officiating there were alternately Heřman Fried and Josef Goldring, both excellent singers. These sermons were held only on Friday evening and were always very well attended, although no sermon was preached.

Our hardest work was to officiate at funerals. This was truly exhausting work, which was also the reason why we performed this duty only once a week.

Terezín was perhaps the only concentration camp where Jewish rites were observed. The bodies of the dead were washed by God-fearing people well-versed in the rites. By order of the German command it was forbidden to place any textiles in the coffins but we had paper shrouds to clothe the dead before laying them in the wooden coffins. Up to August 1942 every corpse was interred in a separate grave. Then mass graves were dug to receive as many as thirty-six coffins. From October 1942 the Terezín crematorium was in operation and on German orders all the dead were cremated. Their ashes were put in small paper boxes and stored in a special columbarium. The wishes of some individuals not to be cremated were disregarded.

Cremation was interrupted for a few days during 1944 when the Germans were expecting a visit from the International Red Cross. They had probably heard that the delegation would include a pious Jew. After the delegation's departure interments stopped again and cremation was continued.

In the first weeks of our stay in Terezín funerals were held from all the barracks in the evening or rather during the night, so as not to attract the attention of the non-Jews still living in Terezín at that time, and also that of the inhabitants of Bohušovice, in whose parish the cemetery was situated. Later on funerals were also held in the afternoon and still later both in the morning and afternoon.

Funeral duty would be as follows: I would be instructed by the Chief Rabbi's office that I was on duty the following Saturday, together with a cantor, and that the funeral procession would set out from the "Magdeburg" block. And so we would wait in front of the building for the arrival of the hearse. This was an ordinary cart with two horses hitched before it. Six or eight men hurried behind it in work clothes. We found the coffins with the dead in the courtyard, the bereaved standing around them. The cantor intoned "jaushev beseser el-jaun."

I spoke a few words over the coffins and the men loaded them onto the cart. Then the cart moved off with all of us following. Relatives were permitted to accompany the coffin only to the main gates of Terezín. We then went on to the "Vrchlabí" block where the largest hospital was situated and where also were the greatest number of deaths. There the ceremony was repeated and then we went on to "Dresden." It would be getting dark by the time we reached the outskirts of Terezín. At the gates we handed our identity cards to the guards and, accompanied by one of them, made our way to the cemetery. The men lowered one coffin after the other into the grave. The rabbi said "Menucho nechauno" over each coffin and it was after 8 o'clock when we had done and set out on our homeward way.

When the crematorium was in operation, one of the dungeons was turned into a mortuary, where the dead were washed. Next to it was a large hall, containing the pulpit, below which the coffins were placed on a raised platform, thirty-five at a time. On each the name of the dead was inscribed. First the cantor sang and then the rabbi spoke. We usually spoke in quite general terms. But when some of the bereaved asked us to mention his father or mother by name, we willingly did so. Many times the coffins held the remains of famous men. If we were informed of this, we always paid homage to their name and work. We Czech rabbis started our address in Czech to give proof that we were on the soil of our country. But then we continued in German for those present to understand us. When speaking Czech we were not afraid to speak up and declare that it was not the Jews that were responsible in the eyes of God for those many deaths, because it was not in our power to give the people enough food or living space or good medical care. We were sure that nobody would denounce us. Our German colleagues also often raised their voices to attack our oppressors. Chief Rabbi Unger often begged us to be more moderate and not to forget who it was that held us in their power. My colleague Dr. Nürnberger from Uherský Brod, however, disregarded this advice and after one of his particularly sharp speeches orders came forbidding further speeches during funerals.

 We were handed a prayer written by Dr. Baeck which we were ordered to read.

But this was not the end of the matter. Dr. Nürnberger was sent East by the next transport, and no one could help him as Dr. Murmelstein, a former rabbi of Vienna and now vice-chairman of the Council of Elders did not like him because of an incident that had occurred in the so called "Talmudhundertschaft." This was a special working team. A large Jewish library had been transported to Terezín from Berlin and a Nazi senior lecturer from some Nazi university had arrived and demanded that it should be catalogued. This work was entrusted to the scholar Dr. Otto Muneles. He in turn chose some helpers from among the ranks of the younger rabbis, among them also Dr. Nürnberger. About a month later this Nazi lecturer came again to see how the work was progressing. He inspected the library, accompanied by Dr. Murmelstein, and when he saw how much work had already been accomplished he congratulated the latter. When he had left Dr. Nürnberger said jokingly to Dr. Murmelstein, who had stayed behind: "You, Mr. Vice-Chairman of the Council of Elders, receive all the Koved (honour) and we get all the work." But he would have done better to have kept silent, for Dr. Murmelstein was insulted and immediately forbade him to continue his work.

But let us return to the Terezín funerals. There were four furnaces at the Terezín crematorium in operation day and night, because the death rate was high, about 18 persons dying every day. Most people died of exhaustion, malnutrition, or succumbed to infections raging in the camp. The stokers at the crematorium were our own Jewish people. And with tears running down their cheeks they took the bodies from the coffins to place them in the furnaces. And they were even sadder when it was the body of a handsome youth or a beautiful girl. After cremation they carefully collected all the ashes and unburned bones and put them into the boxes used in place of urns, carefully labelling each with the name and identification number of the deceased. Every day these urns were sent to the columbarium situated opposite the mortuary, where they were carefully handled by two other Terezín prisoners. They were stored according to number and it was possible to find a particular urn almost immediately. These two prisoners had been working there for two years when they realized to their surprise that they had already stored away 20,000 urns. One afternoon in November 1944 several trucks drove up to the columbarium and about 60 women arrived at the same time. They formed a chain and then passed the urns out and onto the trucks. Then the trucks left, only to return after an hour when the work of loading began again. In this way the urns were taken to the banks of the river Ohře. There Jewish men, closely watched by their guards, had to empty the contents into the river. At that time the Nazis already knew that they had lost the war and were trying to cover up all traces of their reign of bloodshed and terror. But in this they did not succeed. We know full well that more than 35,000 of our people in Terezín fell victim to Nazi atrocities and racial hatred.

At the beginning, Saturday was a day of rest in Terezín, but not for long. The Germans declared that there was a war on, and days of rest could not be considered. In 1943 even the "Day of Atonement" was declared a normal working day and Jewish workers were permitted to participate in services only up to 9 o'clock.

With the permission of the German command, the Council of Elders arranged for the Jews in Terezín to celebrate Passover according to age-old tradition. Whoever applied, received matsos instead of bread, and food prepared at a special kitchen.

Matsos was baked at the military bakery. Every year about 10,000 kilograms were prepared, which goes to show what a large number of Jews celebrated Passover. Matsos was baked under the rabbis' supervision, but nevertheless the Hungarian Jews did not consider them kosher enough and baked their own in the yard of their blocks on a sheet of metal placed over open fires.

Many Seder services were held in Terezín. I held Seder services for the doctors and nurses of the "Hannover" block in 1943 and 1944 and also for about 150 Czech children.

There were also Jews in Terezín who were Catholics or Protestants by religion. They held their Sunday services and we always got on well with them. They held their funeral services in a different hall, but used the same hearses.

The cantors and rabbis were not, with the exception of Dr. Baeck, Neuhaus and Friediger, a privileged class and many of them were sent East. Often they gave proof of their heroism. One Saturday my cantor Grünbaum came to prayers and showed me his call-up papers for a transport. From that moment onwards he was automatically relieved of all duties but he said prayers, read from the Torah, carried out misheberakh as usual, showing so much self-control that nobody knew how he felt. Chief Cantor Balaban acted in exactly the same way. Although he knew that he had been called up for a labour camp, he held the Kol Nidre service and the following day he left. Dr. Salomonski left Terezín with a heavy heart. He made every effort to be crossed out of the transport as he was leaving a gravely ill daughter behind in Terezín, whom he had to entrust to the care of strangers.

After the departure of large labour transports in the autumn of 1944, only four rabbis were left and I myself had to give up work because of a serious illness. Eventually all the spiritual work was borne by Dr. Neuhaus and Dr. Friediger, who did it well, because they did it with great love and devotion.

I often recall all our rabbis and cantors that I met at Terezín. I also remember all the doctors who treated the sick, all the nurses who nursed them. And I remember all those God-fearing men and women who collected the dead, washed and dressed them, placed them in the coffins, buried and cremated them. Their work was kiddush ha-shem.

I remember with great respect and humility the Jews from Vienna and from Germany, who exchanged the slice of meat or sausage weighing 30 grams (less than two ounces) that they received once a week, for a potato or a crust of bread, because not even in Terezín did they want to violate the Jewish ritual laws regarding food.

I have brought a beautiful memento back with me from Terezín: a megillah, written by some skilful man on strong parchment. On the cover the name of the owner is given as Eliezer Löwenstein, son of Jeremy Löwenstein. It was brought me by one of my friends from Kolín who was employed by the German Command in sorting things the guards had taken away when inspecting the luggage of the newly arrived. They had instructions to confiscate anything made of leather and skins, and that included parchment. My friend wanted to protect the prayer roll from defamation and to me it is a symbol that, just as Haman did not suceed in exterminating the Jews of Persia, so Hitler did not succeed in exterminating all the Jews of Europe. Not many of us are left, but if we are always conscious that we are zerah kaudesh

then we shall recover, increase our numbers and we shall call as before: "Kadosh, kadosh, kadosh, adonai sebaot, melo kol ha-arec bodo." Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of the Hosts, and full is the earth of His glory!"

Every autumn in the month of Elul we Czech Jews hold a memorial service at the Jewish cemetery of Terezín, near the crematorium. On that occasion we place wreaths at the foot of the memorial unveiled in 1955, and we think of all our brothers and sisters that perished here in prison, and those who were sent East to be tortured to death there. And we pray to God that never again should people deal with other human beings as cruelly as the Nazis did with the Jews in Terezín, Auschwitz, Warsaw, Treblinka, Majdanek, in Łodż and in all these other extermination camps, the factories of death. As the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and believers in the Torah of Moses, we love life and want life for all creatures.

I Wander Through Theresienstadt

BY ILSE WEBER

I wander through Theresienstadt,
my heart a lump of lead.
The road all of a sudden ends,
near where the fortress stands.

There, on the bridge, I stop and gaze
across the valley below.
I'd like so much to walk beyond,
to go back home just now.

"Home," so beautiful a word,
my heart cries out aloud.
They took my home away from me,
and now I am without.

I turn away, bewildered, tired,
my heart is torn with pain.
Theresienstadt, Theresienstadt,
when will the suffering end, and when
will we be free again?

Dr. RICHARD FEDER

MY FIRST WEDDING CEREMONY AS RABBI IN TEREZÍN



MR. MAX HEISLER, proprietor of an ironmonger's shop in the small town of P. in the district of Poděbrady, had six applications in answer to his advertisement, of which only one interested him. It came from Karel Ballina, who was doing his last month of military service. He wrote that he was born in 1913 in Tučapy, district of Tábor, had finished secondary school with top marks and had been apprenticed to the firm of Josef Vodička in Tábor, where he had worked until he had been called up for military service. He added that he had taken private lessons in German, shorthand and typewriting, business correspondence, and simple and double book-keeping, and also that he was an amateur singer. He wrote that the position offered would suit him, as he would be able to live in his employer's house with full board and lodging. He himself was homeless, since both his parents had recently died. Should he be given the offered position, he asked for an advance of one thousand crowns to buy one Sunday suit and one every-day suit, for he had grown out of all the clothes he had had before joining the army. Mr. Heisler liked this application very much because it touched his kind heart, and so he sat down immediately at his writing table to ask his colleague from Tábor, whom he knew personally, for further information. The answer came by return mail and ran as follows: "Karel Ballina is an excellent person. I should like to congratulate you in advance on having gained such a particularly good employee." Only then did he show all the answers to his advertisement to his wife and ask her advice. She also decided for Karel Ballina. And so he wrote him to come, stating that he would send him an advance of a thousand crowns the following week. He also advised him to buy only the most essential things, for he would be able to buy everything much more cheaply at his new place of work.

Four weeks later, Karel was already standing behind the counter in his new boss's shop and within a few days he knew of every screw and every rivet. That was no easy task, for the shop was large and stocked everything needed by blacksmiths, locksmiths, engineers, joiners, carpenters, brick-layers, and electromechanics, and had pots and pans besides. The new shop assistant was helpful and pleasant to the customers, and so they liked to be served by him and did not bother the proprietor about every detail. The boss's wife also liked him very much, because he tidied his small room himself, keeping it in perfect order. He spent the evenings with his employer's three sons, went for walks with them, and told them many interesting things. In a short while the entire little town knew him, because he joined the choir, where his good tenor voice attracted attention. Many girls now came to the shop to buy a pan or a padlock only for the sake of seeing Karel. He, in turn, soon felt at home in his new place, for as a good dancer and pleasant companion he was also welcomed at all parties. In the winter months he read a lot and studied geography.

In addition to Karel's employer, there lived four Jewish families in the little town of P. First there was the very efficient Mrs. Steiner who, after her husband's death and with the aid of her faithful steward, carried on the work on the farm of which she was tenant. Then there was the cattle dealer Pick. He worked very hard, but was very depressed, because his wife was seriously ill and did not like him to be away from home. Then there was a Jewish painter whose name, I think, was Eger. He was very busy, because he also glazed windows and framed pictures. And last, but not least,

there was Josef Heřman, the butcher and sausage maker, who sent many kilograms of his goods to Prague every day. He had a very capable and diligent wife, who served the customers in the shop and also kept an eye on the workroom. Her greatest care was for her only daughter, Vera, for whom she was trying to find a husband.

Karel called on all the Jewish families and was a welcome guest everywhere. Vera Heřman liked his company, although her mother was not very pleased to see them together.

After two years Karel was the life and soul of the shop and proved so reliable that, for the first time in years, his employer was able to go away on holiday together with his wife. Especially customers from the near-by villages liked him and invited him to harvest home festivals. Karel always accepted such invitations. He came, sat down with all the other guests to lunch and then sang half a dozen songs for them. He also attended all the dances, danced the first dance with his hostess, then led all the girls onto the floor, from the oldest to the youngest. After that he took his leave without attracting attention and rode home on his bicycle. His employer approved of all this, for Karel himself was the best advertisement he could have wished for his shop.

But suddenly the German occupation came, with many orders and prohibitions and there was an end to all pleasures.

Mrs. Steiner had to leave her farm within a month. Mrs. Pick died of grief and her husband moved to his brother's in Mladá Boleslav. Then Mr. Heřman, the butcher disappeared behind the iron bars of the Pankrác prison. Some envious people had denounced him for some alleged offence and the Gestapo came and took him away. He was often beaten and most cruelly interrogated, but no offence could be proved against him. He was not released, however, but sent to a mental hospital instead. His wife and daughter often visited him. The doctor in charge told them every time that Mr. Heřman was perfectly all right and could be released, but that he did not want to go home because he was ashamed, and also because he was afraid he might do some harm to the people he suspected of having denounced him. After 22 years of service, their maid Mary was also suddenly ashamed of working in a Jewish household and left without giving notice. And finally it was the turn of Karel's employer. One day gendarmes came, ordered him to leave his shop and never to set foot in it again. They handed it over with all the stock to a German from the Sudeten district, who bore a Czech name and spoke Czech fluently. So Karel lost his job and did not know what to do. But the very same day Mrs. Heisler came to his room and brought him a message from her husband, saying that Karel could stay with them and that they would treat him as their own son. This made Karel very happy and he gladly accepted the offer.

He decided that he would read a lot and learn foreign languages, but he never got round to it. It was partly because he was in no mood for studying and partly because he considered it his duty to look after all his fellow Jews. He made the round of the villages to visit all his old friends, and they gave him food which he, in turn, gave to his fellow Jews, saving them much walking, much trouble and a lot of money. He watched with amazement how Vera Heřman had changed. She did all the maid's work, washed the linen, swept the courtyard and pavement, and

went to see her father every week, as long as Jews were allowed to use the train. She looked forward to the evenings when Karel would come to visit them and sing his pleasent songs, for not even misfortune had made him give up singing.

But still worse days were in store. First, registration came and then deportation. Karel had much to do. He sewed rucksacks for everybody, helped them to pack and then to carry their loads to Kolín, and from Kolín to Terezín. Karel's employer and his family were sent straight to the East, which troubled Karel very much, for he had hoped to be able to help them, and to repay them in this way part of what they had done for him. Chance would have it that in Terezín he was allotted lodgings in the "Hannover" barracks, block IV, room No. 188, where I was already living with my son and many good friends from Kutná Hora, Světlá and Chlumec. So I had the opportunity of getting to know Karel as a man who thinks of his fellows before thinking of himself.

On the day of his arrival we were issued one mattress each, but Karel asked us to pile them in the hall. He ran off somewhere and in a little while he was back with a damp broom and swept the whole room. Only then did he let us put our mattresses in place and we sat down. Victor Langer, who was in charge of the house, was a former pupil of mine from Roudnice. I was the only one to whom he allotted two mattresses. I do not think that anyone envied me that, because I was the oldest in the room.

After a few days Karel received orders to join a work party that went daily to Bohušovice where they had to load coal and potatoes from trains onto trucks. Every day he brought us a newspaper, from which we learned what was happening in the world. One day, about a fortnight after he had started work, and as we were sitting on our mattresses in the evening, Karel suddenly said: "Listen, everybody, I saw a lovely little cooking stove in the store today. If we had that here instead of that stove of ours, we could warm up our food and even cook something. But heaven only knows how we could get hold of it and bring it here."

Next day he brought it on his back, although the work party was always accompanied by a guard. I do not know how he managed it. On the following day he brought suitable pipes and fire clay and put up the stove. The next day he brought a sack full of wood and tried whether the stove would work properly, which it did. Then we warmed up our evening coffee, which tasted much better that way. From that day onwards we were able to heat up all our food, for Karel supplied us daily with fire wood. The people from the other rooms came and heated their poor bits of food, too. Nimble Vera had some flour with her. She brought it and made dumplings without eggs and fat. Now was not that one of the wonders of the world? About a month later we were given bunks and the younger people settled in the third tier, where they had to dress and undress sitting down. Karel grumbled a good deal about it.

In the meantime all the "Aryans" had been moved away from Terezín and we were allowed to leave our rooms, visit one another and stay out in the streets till 8 p.m. Once Karel came home with his pockets full of potatoes. The following day Vera boiled them and we all ate with them. Vera told us that her father had also arrived, that he was well but very taciturn, and that he could not get used to the idea that all his many years of hard work had been in vain, just as nobody remembered

his charity and humanity. Karel started a choir in our room and many evenings some young men came and sang, even though their stomachs were empty. Many older men also joined the choir, especially Karel Korálek, the uncle of the well-known Karl Schwenk (Karel Švenk).

Karel was not satisfied with the way our room was furnished, for we had neither table nor chairs to sit down together for our meals or to enjoy a game of cards. But Karel had no boards. So he got in touch with some of the younger joiners in the riding school and managed to get the boards from them. He made the table himself and a few weeks later he made some benches. Though this furniture was primitive, it made our lives much more comfortable and the inhabitants of the adjoining rooms felt rather envious. Soon after this Karel got hold of a door mat and saw to it that everyone wiped his boots before entering the room.

Life in Terezín was very uncertain and the terror of the transports to the East hung like a cloud over us. When the news leaked out that the central registry had received orders to draw up a list of one thousand persons, even the most courageous among us shuddered, for nobody knew exactly where these transports were sent to and how the people were treated. So everybody tried to stay in Terezín, doing his work as best he could to avoid any complaints.

Karel also worked well and gained the favour of his superiors, but nevertheless, in September 1942 he was included in a transport and no interventions on the part of his foremen helped. There was nothing for him to do but prepare quickly for departure. He sent a message to that effect to Vera, asking her to come and help him pack.

However, Vera did not come, which surprised and upset Karel very much. Other comrades willingly helped him and he was ready to leave at half past four, but he did not hurry. Suddenly the door was flung open and Vera entered, with a rucksack on her back and carrying her bed-roll.

She called out: "Karel, I'm coming with you. I settled everything myself and have a number in your car."

Karel turned as white as a sheet and said: "I won't have it. You've got your mother and father here. They need you and have a greater right to your help than I. It would be irresponsible, if you went with me and if I took you with me. Quickly, hurry back to the 'Magdeburg' barracks and take back your decision. And anyway, have you your mother's permission?"

"Of course, I have," said Vera and added, "you are closer to me than my parents, and if you won't let me come with you, there is nothing left for me but take my life." Karel was silent for a while, then he looked at me and asked: "Could you marry us, Rabbi?"

"I certainly can," I said, "but only according to Jewish rites. You'll have to get married according to Czechoslovak law when you come back. Have you a wedding ring?"

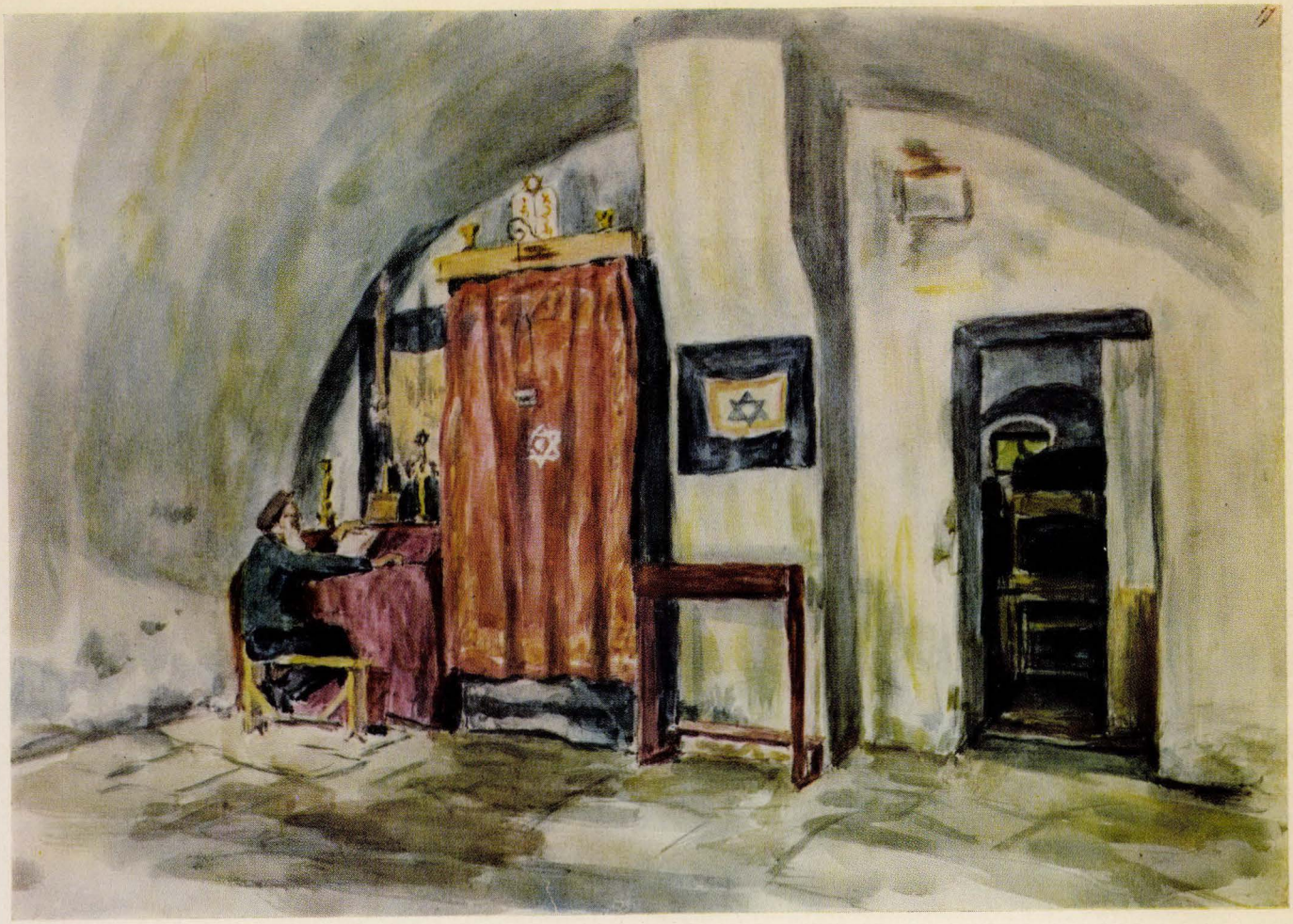
"I have," said the bridegroom.

"How much time is there left?"

"An hour at the most," Karel answered.

"That's enough for me," I said. "Just tell me your Hebrew names."

When they had done so, I sent one young man to the "Dresden" barracks for Vera's



9 Taking consolation in the Holy Scripture (Malvina Schalková)

parents and another one to the kitchen to ask for a drop of black coffee. I myself hurried to the "Magdeburg" barracks to report the marriage to the office of the Chief Rabbi, to borrow a large talis, a silver cup and a printed form for the ksubah (marriage contract) which I filled in immediately. By chance I met an excellent cantor from Brno there and took him along straight away. When I got back, the corridor in front of our room was crowded with about two hundred people, mostly young men, Karel's friends. And so I decided to conduct the marriage ceremony in the corridor, in their presence. I poured some black coffee into the cup, chose two witnesses for the bridegroom and two for the bride and asked four tall youths to hold the talis over the young couple.

Then the cantor welcomed the happy, and at the same time, unhappy fiancés with touching song.

Then I started my address, saying: "What the heart has joined, not even the wrath of enemies can separate. You love each other deeply and want to share your bitter fate. Let us pray to God the Almighty that the clouds of hatred overcasting the sky will disappear as soon as possible, to give way to the dawn of a new era, an era of peace and respect of man for man. My blessings upon you in my own name and in the name of all those who are present here today. I wish you from all my heart that you may return soon to a happier life in our beloved homeland."

Then I pronounced the three blessings, and let both fiancés drink from one cup. The bridegroom put the ring on his bride's finger. I read out the marriage contract and the cantor sang the seven prescribed songs of praise. Finally I pronounced the marriage as valid according to our religious rules and spoke the biblical words of blessing.

The ceremony was over and I realized that I had never conducted a marriage ceremony where the mood had been as pious as here. In the meantime a kind cook had brought two cups of hot soup from the kitchen. The newly-weds sat down at the table and quickly ate. Then they took leave of their parents and all of us and looked for their packs. But these had already been picked up by some of their friends who put them on their backs and carried them right to the "Schleuse" the gates of the "Ústí" barracks, the starting point for all transports. Karel followed them, leading his dear wife, his kind Vera, who was following him of her own free will, because she could not imagine life without him. All the other friends followed and were so moved that nobody spoke a single word, until the newly-weds disappeared in the courtyard of the barracks. Then they all quickly returned to their lodgings, for it was not wise to stand too close to the abyss that swallowed up the best sons and daughters of our people.

I know nothing of the fate of Karel and Vera Ballina, only that Vera's parents soon followed them and that neither the old nor the young returned. Thus I could never celebrate their marriage according to the laws then valid in our country. The other Jews from the little town of P. in the Poděbrady district suffered the same sad fate. Decent people in their district remember them to this day, cursing their murderers. And I, too, honour their memory.

Dr. RICHARD FEDER

HOW I OFFICIATED AT THE MOST FESTIVE WEDDING CEREMONY IN TEREZÍN



ONE afternoon in the summer of 1943 my beloved nephew, engineer O.F., came to see me in my room in the "Hannover" barracks in Terezín that I shared with many others. My nephew lived with his family and his mother, my sister, in a spacious room in the "Magdeburg" barracks, for he was a member of the AK I and secretary to engineer Zucker. It was part of his duty to issue passes and this he did in a very lenient way, never telling off people who came to his lodgings even in the evening hours. He was an excellent Hebrew scholar, as he had lived in Palestine for two years. In Terezín it was he who organized all Hebrew lectures and discussions. I was very happy over his unexpected visit and curious to know the reason for his coming during working hours. I was afraid that his mother, my dear sister, might not be feeling well. But I was wrong; he was indeed the bearer of good news. His daughter Liza, a worker in the staff garden, nick-named Ali Baba, had become engaged to a serious young man, who had studied at the Rumanian grammar school at Cernauti and had then come to Prague to study medicine and continue his musical studies, of which he was extremely fond. As soon as the universities were closed he left Prague and found himself a job with a farmer not far from Mělník. There he drove horses and did all kinds of agricultural work. He was so good at his job that the farmer kept him as long as he could. In Terezín he also worked in agriculture in a group working with machines, which he understood very well. Besides this, he played second violin with great success at many concerts. He had only one eccentricity, he was rather taciturn. But his bride did not mind that, for she always saw to it that the conversation did not flag. I congratulated him and told him that I would come to his lodgings in the evening to congratulate the bride, her mother and grandmother.

This was not the end of our conversation, however. My nephew continued: "The fiancés want to be married in a fortnight from next Sunday and I have come to ask you to officiate. I know that you will gladly do so. But the matter is not as simple as you might think; on the contrary, thanks to my wife it is very complicated. Just imagine! My wife has taken it into her head that the wedding of her only daughter must be more beautiful and more festive than any wedding ceremonies that have taken place here so far. She has already asked three cantors to participate. She further wishes that her relative, Rabbi Dr. Ferda of Budějovice, should officiate together with you, as well as Chief Rabbi Unger, who lives in the 'Magdeburg' barracks a few steps away from us, and whose wife comes to see us every day. I have been trying in vain to talk my wife out of this idea. I have told her that it is all nonsense, but she insists. I have thought a lot about the whole business myself and asked various rabbis, cantors and shamises and all say that they have never heard of such a thing. One of the shamises even told me the reason why. He said: 'Maybe you know our people. If you do, then you know that our rich men never tried to save more than on religious matters and even to pay for one rabbi, one cantor and one shamis seemed a large expense to them. They would never have considered two or three.' When I told my wife, she said: 'There you are. So far it has never been done because people wanted to save money. But that argument is no good in Terezín, because we shall pay neither the cantors, nor the rabbis here. And you know the proverb: where there is a will, there is a way.' Very angrily I replied: 'All right, but how?' And do you know what she answered to that? She said: 'I'm

not going to worry about that. That's what I've got you for. You advise the gentlemen in the Council how to settle this or that. Now you help yourself for once!' There is only one point on which I fully agree with my wife, and that is that not one word of German must be spoken during our daughter's wedding."
At last I managed to get a word in. I thanked my nephew for the honour of being chosen, and also that I had not the slightest objections against three cantors, nor against the assistance of Rabbi Dr. Ferda and Chief Rabbi Unger. It was only a question of how to divide the functions so that nobody could say that he had been made a fifth wheel at the cart. The matter was considerably simplified by the fact that not one word of German was to be spoken, for in this way Chief Rabbi Unger would cause no trouble. Then I considered the matter a little in silence, before saying to my nephew: "And now take paper and pencil. I shall dictate to you the preliminary proposal for the ceremony. We shall see if it can be done. Write:
(1) The best of the three cantors will open the ceremony by singing the 150th Psalm, or any other Psalm according to his own choice.
(2) Rabbi Dr. Ferda will welcome both in Czech and Hebrew all those present who have come to witness this joyful family event and to increase the joy of the betrothed.
(3) The young couple will stand under the khupe and the second cantor will welcome them by singing 'mi adir'.
(4) Then I shall preach and after the sermon I shall proclaim the three paeans of praise, hand the betrothed the first goblet, explain to them the meaning of the wedding ring and call on the bridegroom to put it on his bride's finger and to repeat after me the words of the wedding ceremony.
(5) The Chief Rabbi will read kesuba, the marriage contract.
(6) The third cantor will sing the seven songs of praise and will hand the betrothed the second cup.
(7) Dr. Ferda will proclaim the marriage valid according to the laws of Moses and Israel.
(8) The Chief Rabbi will bless the betrothed in Hebrew.
(9) All three cantors will join in singing a Hebrew chorale.
Show my proposal to your wife and ask all those who will officiate to express their agreement or suggest changes."
But my nephew cried out delightedly: "Your proposal is wonderful and I am sure that everybody will agree to it, including my wife. Thank you very much indeed. I'm sorry that I did not turn to you before for advice. My wife will be beside herself with joy for having got her own way and will say: 'There you are. I told you that everything is possible if you want it hard enough and if we go and ask people with many years' experience.' "
My proposal was indeed praised by everybody. Only the fiancés objected rightly, that it would be a long ceremony. They were right, but that day nobody took any notice of their opinion.
The wedding day came. It was celebrated in the prayer room of the "Magdeburg" barracks, which also served as concert, theatre and lecture hall. When I entered the room at precisely half past ten, it was so full that I hardly managed to get to my place. The betrothed who followed me had even greater difficulties. Nobody wanted to take the smallest step back for fear that he would not be able to get to his

place again, and so the betrothed's clothes were sadly crumpled, before they reached their appointed places. But at that moment one of the cantors had begun to sing and silence fell on the hall, as if indeed it had been a synagogue. The welcoming words spoken by Dr. Ferda were sincere and met with great response. Then the betrothed and their witnesses went to stand under the canopy and I advanced to stand before them, together with the second cantor, who sang 'mi adir' in a most solemn way. He was happy to have so many grateful listeners that day. Then it was my turn and I said the following, as far as I can remember today, nineteen years later:

Dearly beloved,
We European Jews have been struck by a terrible scourge, through no fault of our own. From the heights that we reached through hard work, we have been struck down to the lowest depths. We have been deprived not only of our citizens' rights, but of all natural human rights. We have been robbed of all our goods and chattels and cast out from the society in which we had firm roots. Today we are living on drift ice not knowing where the sea's waves will carry us. We are forced to work here, and we are doing all kinds of work, both light and hard. We work in the fields, gardens, barns, in households, kitchens, bakeries, in the laundries and many, many different workshops. We build roads and railway lines, do duty in electric power stations and water supply services, in hospitals and clinics. We work much, though we live and eat badly. Should our former neighbours see us here, they would be amazed at what they see, and pity us. But do we feel miserable? Do we weep? Do we complain? Do we lament from morning till night? Do we curse those that have humiliated us? Do we pledge to take revenge against them? Do we take our own lives in desperation? We do nothing of that kind. We fully believe that one fine day the war will end and that our cause will be solved to our satisfaction at an international level. We hope for a happy future, we trust in justice and this is why we are of happy mind throughout all this misery. We do the work that we have to do, but in our free time we belong to ourselves and try to uplift our thoughts. We read beautiful books and learn foreign languages. We attend interesting and educational lectures that are being organized here, we go to concerts, to the theatre and cabaret, we play football and other games, waiting patiently for the tempest to subside. Sometimes we dream of the beautiful future awaiting us, building castles in the air. We have adapted ourselves to this temporary situation and have become patient, humble, modest, and gradually we no longer even understand that there were times when we were choosy and made great demands and asked only the best, the most beautiful, the most modern for ourselves. We are ashamed today that we used to be so petty. We shall not be like that again after the war. We shall not long any more for large flats and many servants. We have learned to work and appreciate this. We shall clean our own lodgings, cook our own food, and make our own fires in the stoves. But we shall also be closer to the working people and not long to get among the "superior" classes that disappointed us most.
The clearest indication of our healthy optimism is the fact that here in Terezín young men meet girls, and take them in marriage. And it is our young men that

have changed most. Before they had great demands, looked only for brides with a large dowry and a wonderful trousseau, but today they are looking for kind, diligent, merry girls, who are determined to walk with them along the thorny, stony, difficult road of life and to share with them all that fate might bring, happiness and sorrow, good and evil, joy and sadness, plenty and deprivation, a safe home or the fate of the wanderer.

In the Bible we read three words, the meaning of which we have never understood as well as today. They are: Lekh, red, vealita—go, lower yourself and you will rise. We too have sunk very low but risen very high, because we did not let our sad fate overwhelm us; we have not lost hope that right will finally be victorious over injustice, friendship over hostility, love over hatred and peace over war. If these terrible times had not come, you two young people would not have met and loved and decided to share your lives. And so you may say: "Gam zu letova—good may arise even out of evil." All of us, assembled here today, wish that the war may soon end and that a better life may start for you. We wish for you a future life that is smooth, pleasant and full of joys.

When I had uttered these words I knew nothing definite about the sad fate of our friends that had been sent to the East, nor anything about what was in store for us in Terezín. I did not realize that two long years would pass before the war would end. The ceremony finished when the blessing was given and people started to leave. But suddenly all the bride's girl friends from the staff gardens came to embrace the bride, their dear friend Ali Baba, and all the men working in agriculture—"Landwirtschaft"—came to shake the bridegroom by the hand and to wish him much health and happiness.

It was twelve o'clock when the nearest relations sat down to the wedding dinner. And what did we have? Potato soup, mashed potatoes, bread cake. And we drank the young couple's health in cups of "tea."

The newly-weds received one wedding present, and everybody was very pleased with it. The manager of the farm, the German Kurzavy sent a large basket of vegetables, lettuce, cucumbers, kale and cauliflower, cabbage and carrots. He did even more for the young people. He allotted them a tiny little room in a little house so that they had their own home, and put their names on the list of indispensable people. And so they remained in Terezín till the end of the war and the coming of a new era. Their start in married life was really sad, for none of their parents, brothers or sisters lived to see the end of the war and they had to start out in life without the advice and help of kin folk.

The most festive wedding in Terezín was in fact a very poor affair, a "shnorrer" wedding. The bride's dress was made over from an evening dress a lady from Munich had brought with her, because she had thought that she was going to "Theresienbad," as the Nazis told practically all the Jews from Europe that they sent there. The stockings were her mother's and the shoes a friend's, for the bride had been 16 years old when she had come to Terezín and had long outgrown all her clothes. She carried a bunch of field flowers that she had picked herself. The bridegroom had taken the potatoes for the lunch from the cellar without asking anybody's permission and the thickening for the soup had been brought from the

kitchen by one of the cooks. The bread for the cake as well as the necessary sugar and margarine had been saved up by the family, who reduced their own rations to be able to do so. But the saddest of all was that, under the canopy we offered the betrothed a beautiful silver goblet cup twice to drink from. But what was in it? Cold, bitter black coffee! And that was indeed the symbol of the life we led in 1943.



The Butterfly

BY PAVEL FRIEDMANN

The last one it was, the very last
a richly glaring, bitterly blending butterfly
as when a sun-tear explodes on a white-hot stone
such was its yellow

and it carried itself suspended on high
and rising it kissed my last world good-bye

For seven long weeks I've lived here already ghetto-bound
here my own people have found me
the dandelion winks at me
and also in the yard the white twigs of the chestnut tree

but never again have I seen a butterfly
that one was surely the last
for butterflies are not to be found in the ghetto

(translated by I. Sonntag)

CHAPTER III

THE CHILDREN

YOUNG PEOPLE IN TEREZÍN / Dr. Ota Klein

THE CHILDREN OF TEREZÍN / I. Lauscherová

FROM THE DIARIES OF TEREZÍN CHILDREN

Helga Kinsky

Helga Weissová-Hošková

Charlotta Verešová



For these things I weep;
my eyes flow with tears... Lamentations 1:16

Dr. OTA KLEIN

YOUNG PEOPLE IN TEREZÍN

Excerpts from a university thesis



This text is one chapter from the study entitled "Influence of the Concentration Camp on the Ethical Character of Jewish Youth." It was handed in as a thesis at the Philosophical Faculty of the Charles University in Prague in 1948, by a young student of sociology. In it an attempt had been made to trace the moral development of a group of Jewish children in the thirties and forties, through normal childhood, the years of Nazi occupation in Czechoslovakia, their stay at the Terezín ghetto and the Auschwitz concentration camp, up to their return home. The author himself was only a few years older than the group he examined and he suffered the same fate. His work was therefore more an answer to the urgent need of adjusting himself in some way to this fateful experience than anything else.

After this study had been written, very many far more important scientific works and documentaries were published throughout the world, dealing with the same or a similar subject. The author wishes to state again—as he has already pointed out in the introduction to this paper—that the scientific value of this study is negligible. Today, sixteen years later, he himself would write many things differently. But, since it has not lost its character of a living document to this very day, the author takes the liberty of submitting one chapter for this volume without any changes.

THE RISE OF THE GHETTO It is not exactly known why the Germans first established a camp at the Large Fortress of Terezín, which they later on turned into a Jewish ghetto. This ghetto differed so much from all concentration camps that it seems to stand in direct conflict to everything known of the Nazis and their attitude towards the Jews. There exists proof, it is true, that at one time the Germans were actually planning to establish a huge Jewish reservation on the territory of present-day Poland, which would hold about 5 million persons, i.e., the entire Jewish inhabitants of the European area the Nazis held before their Russian campaign (M. Weinreich: *Hitler's Professors, The Part of Scholarship in Germany's Crimes against the Jewish People*, New York, 1946). It is known, however, that they gave up this plan both for economic and for technical reasons (impossibility of hermetically sealing off such a huge area from the rest of the world, etc.), as well as ideological reasons (not a rigorous enough solution of the Jewish question). The failure of these considerations and plans that had been prepared down to the most surprising details, probably gave the signal in 1941 to the beginning of the last stage in the solution of the Jewish question, i.e., the systematic extermination of the Jews in so-called "Vernichtungslagern".

TEREZÍN ENVIRONMENT It is practically impossible to present a static picture of the Terezín milieu, since it changed from day to day even in its most basic features. If I nevertheless attempt such a description, then only for the reason that it is impossible within the framework of this study to present any other picture that would correspond more closely to reality. We must, however, constantly bear in mind, that only very few institutions—in the widest sense of the word—as well as only very few inhabitants, survived throughout the existence of the Terezín ghetto, i.e., from December 1941 up to the liberation.

The period from Munich up to the evacuation to Terezín is a period punctuated by one terrible blow after the other, curtailing the rights of the Jewish citizen. It is a time when all existing ways of life are abruptly interrupted, and which brings—especially for young people, not yet fully anchored in social life, a new world, a new system of values. In describing the Terezín surroundings I shall limit myself only to the elements that are of considerable influence for young people who have gone through from one to three years of their lives there, mainly during puberty.

"CONSTITUTION" But for occasional German check-ups, life in Terezín was more or less free of Germans, and the illusion of Jewish Self-Government was very successful. Successful, naturally, except for the fact that the ghetto inhabitants realized, that the "constitution" of their state within the state, the sum total of basic rights and duties, was precisely determined by the Germans, absolutely dependent on their caprice, and liable to changes at any hour. Especially § 8 and § 10 of the basic laws of the Common Order of the Jewish Self-Government are of decisive importance:

"... The smuggling of letters is punishable by death. Any attempt is judged as the completed act itself."

"Illegal departure from the ghetto is considered as an attempt at escape. Gendarmes are empowered to use fire arms to prevent such attempts."

These two regulations set the limit in space of the ghetto inhabitants' world; the area of the fortress may only be left when departing for the Small Fortress (as punishment) or in a transport with destination unknown. Work under guard outside the ghetto walls forms the only exception. It is an amazing fact that these two regulations aiming at the most complete isolation of the ghetto population from the rest of the world are also decisive factors for life within the ghetto, not only from the psychological point of view (feeling of captivity) but also economically.

HOUSING CONDITIONS The number of "dwelling units" in Terezín is theoretically unchangeable, since the area cannot be extended. But as the number of inhabitants varied from 5,000 to 60,000 and all these people had to live somewhere, or rather, had to have a place to sleep in, so this formed one of the most terrible of all Terezín deprivations; lack of living space in the true sense of the word was controlled by the larger or smaller number of transports arriving in, or leaving Terezín. If we consider that at a time of average occupation (30,000 inhabitants), each one was entitled to 3.5 square metres of space, we shall understand that this had very serious psychological and hygienic results. (This regulation was not valid unconditionally, especially in the case of young people.)

HUNGER Another material factor was food supply. Even though the young people's situation was better than that of the adults, it nevertheless was not good enough to prevent hunger, or rather fear of hunger, from becoming one of the main reasons for demoralisation and re-assessment of values. The following excerpt from the criminal code valid in Terezín, will give a characteristic example:

"Minor punishment:

(a) loss of advantages of better living conditions
(b) loss of right to hold a higher position within Jewish self-government
(c) exclusion from employment with increased food rations or other advantages.

(Re a): advantages of better living include: living with one's family, living in rooms with more than 3.5 square metres per person, or in rooms inhabited by less than four persons)."
(Quoted from the survey drawn up for the SS Command in Terezín.)

TRANSPORTS To these three factors (captivity, housing shortage, hunger), a fourth must be added, the Damocles' sword hanging over everyone's head in the form of transports with destination unknown (this was literally so, for nothing was known in Terezín as to the transports' destination).
This forms the economic basis of life in Terezín, from which the social structure arises.
It follows that the Jewish Self-Government, whose importance the Germans constantly stressed, is an illusory concept, if for no other reason than that all basic material conditions were determined and changed without any influence whatsoever on the part of the Jews. The social situation was similar.

SOCIAL HIERARCHY The Germans, though normally giving the Jews a free hand in the establishment of the social organization, had determined everything in advance. The "Führer" principle, i.e., the principle of personal responsibility of every superior for the job entrusted to him, and the consequent unconditional subordination of all underlings to him, was enforced by the Germans. This is clearly shown by § 2 of the Terezín "constitution":

"According to the general regulations of the Jewish Self-Government (note: these regulations bore the signature of SS-Hauptsturmführer Dr. Seidl, the first ghetto commander) the Judenältester is the highest in the Jewish governing body in Terezín. He has full authority, i.e., his position in Jewish communal life is adapted in a way analogous to the principle of leadership."

This is the corner stone of Jewish social structure in Terezín, in which very little could be changed by even the most democratic ghetto officials. In any case, the longing to gain in importance supported this state of affairs. The declassing and pauperization of people, most of whom had in their former life held responsible functions or had worked independently, resulted in their seeking a substitute for their lost social positions in corresponding functions, at least as far as fictitious power was concerned. It must therefore be admitted that, thanks to the influence of the Germans, and also due to the influence of the ghetto inhabitants themselves, the social hierarchy was transferred from normal life to Terezín in such a form and such intensity as to border on the grotesque. Terezín was full of officials, managers, vice-managers, etc., of whom only very few realized that they were transferring old, established customs into conditions where they were completely out of place.

AGE GROUPS Age and fitness for work was of extreme importance in the life of Terezín. In the beginning children were exempt from inclusion in transports, and so were "very old persons", i.e., men and women that had exceeded a certain very elastic age limit. This meant that the number of workers continuously decreased, whereas the number of inhabitants that were unfit for work, and formed a passive element in the economic balance of the ghetto, increased out of all proportion. This resulted in one of the most painful aspects of social life in Terezín, the effects of which may be observed in young people to this very day: the moral postulate of respect for old age suddenly lost its validity for the adults and therefore naturally also for the young. The housing and food situation of the old people was indeed desperate. When anybody died of hunger in Terezín, it was the aged. This state was the result of decisions taken by the Jewish self-government and dictated by utter necessity. There was no other way out but to cut down rations for the old, if children and working people were to receive the minimum to keep alive. And so it happened that the young people—aware of the change in the position of the old — lost one of the moral principles, normally very strongly developed, especially in Jewish families. Another important social factor was the introduction of compulsory work for men and women from sixteen years upward and the regulation enforcing separate accommodation for husbands and wives. This meant that the women were not able to look after their families and educate their children, family life suffered greatly, families were in many cases broken up completely, and finally it made necessary the establishment of children's homes.

CHILDREN'S HOMES Even at the time when Terezín was still a camp limited to the barracks, and the town itself was left to the original inhabitants, special accommodation was arranged for the children in various men's and women's blocks. When the whole town was cleared out for the Jews (in 1942) several large houses were allocated for this purpose. Not all children and young people were placed in separate children's houses, but we may say, even without exact statistical data, that the overwhelming majority of children we are dealing with here (birth year 1926-1930) lived in children's homes.

In what way did the life of the children differ from that of adults? The Germans themselves were not interested in children under sixteen and did not interfere in the solution of this problem. It was therefore left to the self-government to decide how they would adjust the children's lives. Today, with the perspective of time, one may say that if anything positive at all was ever achieved in the ghetto of Terezín, then it was achieved in this field. Children received better food and had better housing conditions. They lived relatively separate from the adults. This and a few other factors resulted in the young people not succumbing to the demoralization caused by the difficult living conditions to such an extent as might have been expected otherwise.

THE CHILDREN'S LIFE Life in the children's homes was organized collectively. Large collectives numbering from 200 to 300 children were subdivided into smaller collectives by rooms, including from 15 to 40 boys or girls. Every collective, at the beginning chosen only according to age, had a leader and one or more helpers. Pedagogues were recruited mostly from former teachers and students, all of them young people who understood children and were interested in working with them, for this employment brought with it hardly any advantages. Besides the pedagogues, a doctor, nurses, social welfare workers and auxiliary staff were attached to every home.

TEACHING The most important educational problem was undoubtedly how to keep the children occupied. As the ghetto management was justly afraid that if they were to ask for permission for classes to be held, this would only be granted on condition that the teaching language would be German, they delayed this solution right up to the liquidation of Jews in the Protectorate in October 1944. Therefore all attempts at organizing classes were only semi-illegal. After initial improvisations, however, a centrally administered educational system was successfully drawn up, which, under the given conditions, gives proof of the high cultural and pedagogical work of the teachers. Difficulties were tremendous: constant arrival and departure of transports and the fluctuation of pupils connected with it; terrible shortage of text books and teaching aids; teaching in rooms where the children slept, ate and lived. Nevertheless the fact remains that all children from 14 to 15 years of age and living in homes, were included in the teaching process and gifted children were taught the syllabus corresponding to the fourth and fifth class of the secondary school.

Working morale was high above normal, especially in the higher classes, as assistant professor Zwicker of the Brno university and secondary school teachers confirmed.

An important role was probably played here by the consciousness of illegal activity and the feeling of adventure roused by it. Usually teaching was carried out according to the syllabus of the elementary schools in the First Republic (i.e., 1918-1939), so that pupils staying at Terezín for any length of time could be placed in the class corresponding to their age on returning home. In some subjects (Czech literature, history) their knowledge was not limited by Protectorate teaching.

WORK Boys and girls completing their 15th year, were placed—under supervision of the Juvenile Labour Exchange—in work groups in employment for which they had shown interest and talent (naturally only such crafts as were carried on in Terezín). It was the aim of the Labour Exchange to enable the children to learn, or possibly finish their training in some trade (carpenter, locksmith, electromechanic, joiner, etc.) or intensive farming and gardening. Especially in the former group, results were obtained fully in keeping with results of normal apprentice training. (Certificates obtained by the Terezín apprentices after three years on the basis of theoretical and practical examinations were recognized by the corresponding Czech institutions.) The other young people mostly worked in the market gardens on the outskirts of Terezín, supervised by instructors.

COLLECTIVE LIFE Another positive element in the life of young people in the Terezín children's homes that had a lasting effect, was the collective way of life. Some children's collectives (according to the pedagogues' personality or the child "material") bear comparison with the best youth groups in Czechoslovakia and abroad.

THE MAGAZINE "VEDEM" The work of one such collective —the "ŠKID" home for 14—16-year-old boys, named after the well-known Soviet home for young vagrants—is the magazine "VEDEM".

As this magazine is one of the few written sources on which we can found our considerations of young people and their moral life in Terezín, we consider it important to discuss this cultural document in greater detail.

The magazine "VEDEM" was founded on the initiative of the manager and the young people of the ŠKID children's home, simultaneously with the introduction of self-administration in the home. It appeared every Friday evening, when it was read aloud at the weekly plenary meeting of the home. In the beginning it used to be put on the notice-board for the rest of the week, but this was stopped later on for reasons of safety. The editorial board was elected and always consisted of some of the most resourceful boys who showed literary talent. Neither the manager of the home nor other grown-ups shared in the work, but the editorial was set aside for them. In the beginning there were few contributors, but in the course of time VEDEM became indeed the platform of the home, so that we are faced with the unusual phenomenon that anyone wanting to speak to the entire home used it to express his poetic, artistic, literary-esthetic or critical views. It may safely be said that in the two years of this magazine's existence the first number of which appeared on December 18th, 1942, we can find a faithful reflection of the behaviour, thoughts and feelings of the collective of boys at the threshold of manhood, throughout two dramatic years of their lives.

The following is worth noticing: every boy in the home had, as is usual in any youth movement, a special nickname. In the beginning the boys used these nicknames instead of their signatures. Later on a "literary" circle was formed, consisting of about ten boys, all of them showing more than average literary promise, who signed all their articles, poems or drawings with the impersonal term "academy". We mention this as one instance of the highly developed collective feeling of the young people in Terezín.
VEDEM had its ups and downs, like any other magazine, but on the whole it may be said that it proves the unusually well developed intellectual and cultural efforts of this young collective.

CULTURE Some of the Terezín youth homes had a fixed daily programme, beginning usually with 12—15 minutes of physical exercises. After breakfast morning lessons were held. There was a compulsory period of rest after lunch, in the afternoon sport or some other free programme. The evenings—after parents had been visited—were filled six times a week with cultural programmes.
"Cultural report. Our cultural programme for the last fortnight has finally reached the level we were all longing for. The programme was as follows: Sunday, January 3—Recital of Wolker's poems in commemoration of the poet's death. We read and discussed some selected lyrics that were new to us. Then 'Prófa' recited the one-act play 'Hospital'. On Monday, Miša S. delivered the first part of his successful lecture on the textile industry. On Tuesday, Dr. Zwicker lectured, explaining some basic economic terms to us. On Wednesday 'lights out' was put earlier, at eight-fifteen, because of Laubi, who was seriously ill. Therefore the second part of Neu's lecture had to be postponed till Thursday. On Friday Mrs Klinke came to see us and sang some Hebrew songs for us and one aria from the 'Bartered Bride'. Fricek F. came on Monday and spoke fascinatingly about sport and about his own experiences from his sporting career. On Tuesday we read. On Wednesday Sisi E. lectured on chemistry in the food industry. On Thursday Shmuel K. spoke interestingly about modern psychology. Of especial importance for our cultural life is the re-establishment of two study circles (Latin and Russian). Cultural Correspondent" (quoted from VEDEM no. 5, January 15, 1943).
"Cultural report. Last week a splendid lecture programme began. So far the following lectures have been delivered: Liebstein on Television; Ginz on Buddhism; Beno K. on Hindooism; Mühlstein on Mozart; Kahn on Old Czech; Weil on History of Chess; Roth on Cervantes; Kotouč on Criminalistics . . ." (quoted from VEDEM no. 4, January 15, 1944. In contrast to lectures held in 1943, the boys themselves give the lectures.)
Many competitions were arranged: the best decoration of the home, sport trophies, the best article or poem in celebration of the First of May.
Most homes were self-administered. Such feelings of group affinity were cultivated in the young people that moving to another home was one of the most serious punishments. "Units" formed within the homes, whose members shared food, clothes, etc.
These positive aspects undoubtedly left deep traces not only in the children's minds but also in their attitudes on life. Of 130 boys and girls that were asked whether



10 Last Supper before the transport leaves (Jiří Valdštýn)

11 Shot of the Ghetto (unknown Artist)

12 Terezín casemates ("Old-Age Home") (Otto Ungar)

13 The Ghetto through the eyes of the painter Bedřich Fritta

14 View from the Small Fortress of Terezín (photo)

15 Potemkin-style shops in the Ghetto (Bedřich Fritta)

16 Women's dwellings (Malvina Schalková)

17 View of the Ghetto (Bedřich Fritta)





12



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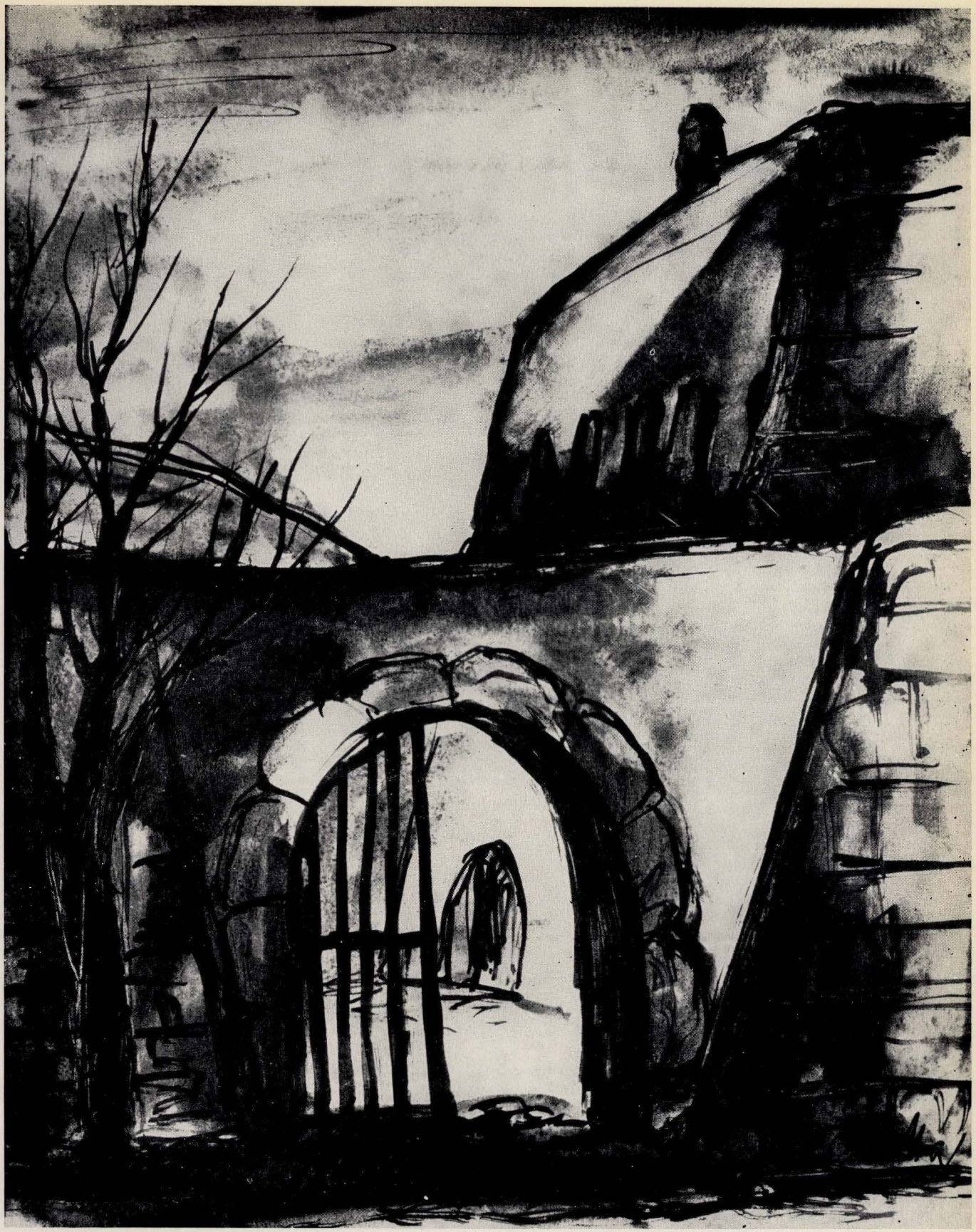


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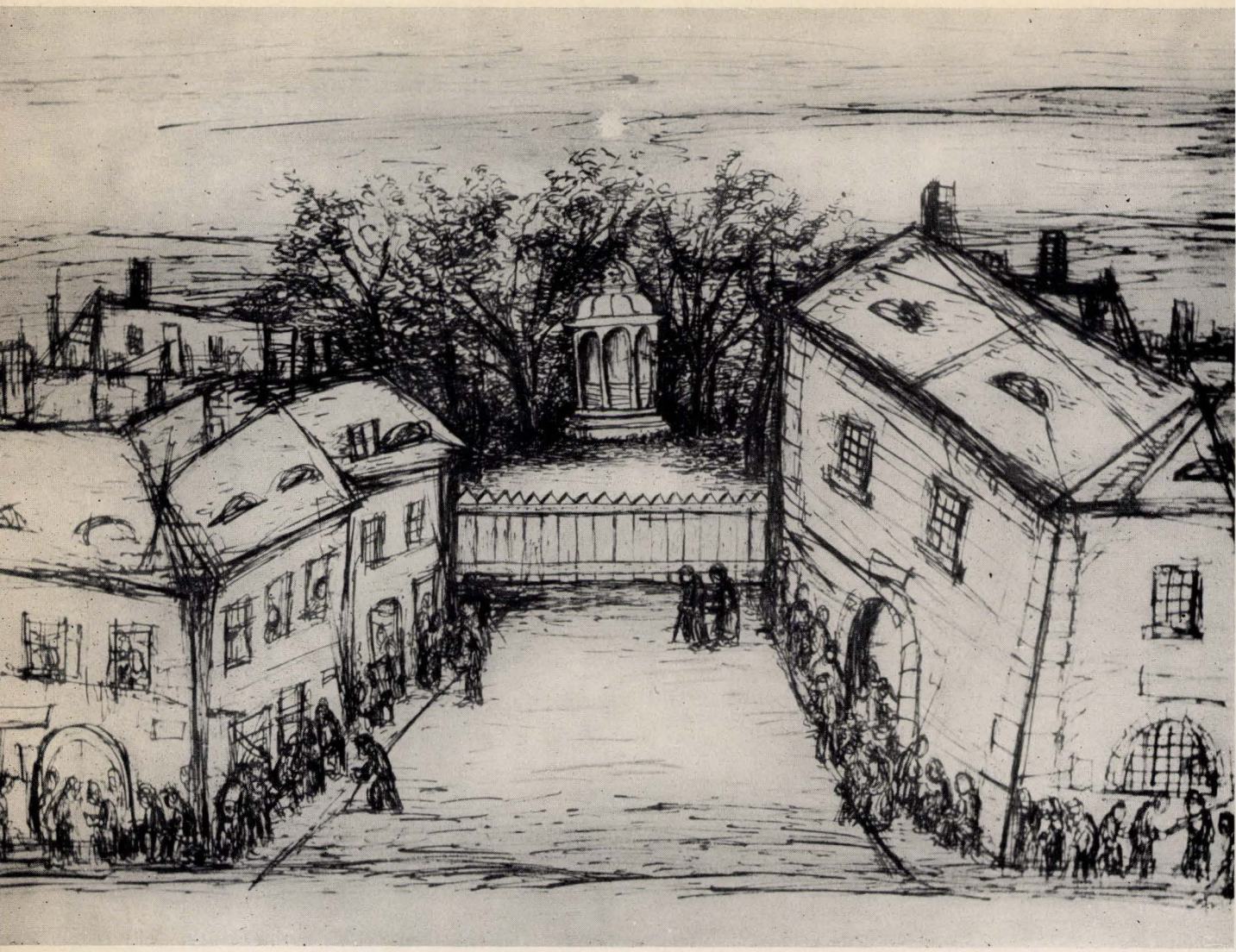




18 Expecting the worst (Leo Haas)



19 Women at work (Malvina Schalková)



20 At the borders of the Ghetto (Bedřich Fritta)

they took some joyful memory with them from Terezín, 106 answered in the affirmative, mentioning collective life in the homes. (Note: the importance of these statements must not be exaggerated, for their stay in Terezín alternated with such terrible experiences, that today, after the passage of time, the period of Terezín imprisonment appears in a favourable light.)

In the above paragraphs we have stressed the positive aspects of the young people's life in Terezín. Between the described positive and negative aspects, however, there existed one huge abyss. Both together produce the picture of a grotesque and tragicomic situation in which the highest ethical phenomena stand side by side with lowest moral depravity.

PINCHING (ŠLOJS) The first place in the negative qualities appearing in Terezín moral life was pinching—šlojs, a kind of theft characteristic of life in concentration camps.(1)

In Auschwitz the same phenomenon was called "organization, to organize." The reason why new names are found for old vices, is simple: most goods were owned collectively. The term "stealing" refers to individual property, "šlojs" to collective property. Another reason, which is psychological, lies in the fact that people for whom the image of stealing was a social stereotype connected with a feeling of discomfort, tried to adjust their inhibitions by introducing a new word.

Practically anything could be pinched that was worth anything in the Terezín scale of values: food from the kitchen, bread from the baker's, potatoes from the stores, coal from the cellars, wood from the yards, clothes and linen from the stores where they were distributed, etc.

There were many ways in which the official food ration might be increased. For instance: mother was employed in the kitchen, and due to the strict economic check she was unable to take away sufficient food for her children or friends. And so her small son or daughter simply came for the food. He held out his tin, mother gave him one, two, three, four helpings. How simple it was! But how ruinous and dangerous for the future moral life of the child it is, when he sees his mother or father steal, without shame and more or less publicly. Here is another example: food was issued in the canteens against food tickets, i.e., a piece of cardboard with the name of the owner, the number of the canteen and 30 coupons, one for every day of the month. Those on duty in front of the canteen checked the food tickets, cut off the coupons and reported the number of helpings to be issued to the kitchen. This

(1) Etymologically the world šlojs is not quite clear. Profesor Utitz in his book about Terezín ("Psychology of Life in the Terezín Concentration Camp," Prague 1947, p. 34), incorrectly states: In Terezín there is an old mill with a weir. At that mill new arrivals were robbed of all their property . . ." The German word for weir is Schleuse, and this is supposed to have given rise to the word "šlojsovat." I do not think that this explanation is correct. New arrivals were never searched in the above-mentioned mill, but outside the ghetto precincts. Every new transport was kept separated from all the others, so that searching could be carried out, as well as registration etc. The lodgings used for this purpose were called Schleuse—weir—by the Germans. This word does not only mean weir, but also sluice-gate, some kind of dividing line between the place from where the transport came and the ghetto itself. Everybody had to pass there and was robbed of most of his 50 kilograms of luggage. The association of ideas between this and pinching in Terezín is obvious.

seems a very simple and safe way of checking. But that is where you are wrong. Adults and children—particularly children were especially inventive in this field—always found a new manner of cheating, and again and again they succeeded in deceiving those on duty at the entrance, or the cook. All the teachers' arguments against this cheating failed. The children knew very well that the cooks were preparing 100—200 helpings more than the daily 1,000—1,500 they were supposed to issue. If I succeed in getting an extra helping, I don't rob anybody of anything, except perhaps the cooks. But they divide the remainder up among themselves or their friends, anyway.

I deal with these phenomena in greater detail, to be able to show the development of one moral concept from its beginning up to the time it became an institution. To "šlojs", i.e. pinching, became part and parcel of the children's life and though they did not admit that they themselves have no inhibitions in this respect, they considered it a misdemeanour in others who steal collectively owned property.

But that is not all. The boys and girls had not yet a clearly defined picture of the difference between šlojsing and stealing. Šlojsing was connected for them with risky adventure and the division line between what was permitted and what was not was for them only between šlojsing and stealing from a comrade (so-called Kameradschaftsdiebstahl). From the two following examples it is evident that šlojsing may even take on the character of a good deed, if used in a good cause.

"Sport. Table tennis . . . The benefactor Hoppla, who in one way or another obtained ping-pong balls, which he presented to us, enabled us in this way to play a tournament . . ." (quoted from VEDEM, December 12, 1942.)

" . . . we must praise the Kangaroo, who managed to get diet dinners for four boys who really needed them." (Quoted from VEDEM, December 30, 1942.)

There were many discussions among children and pedagogues concerning "šlojsing," with negative results. Partly because the teacher himself was in doubt whether pinching might be absolutely condemned. Should he, for instance, condemn the pinching of fruit from the trees, while fully aware of the lack of vitamins in the children's diet? Also, he himself was never absolutely guiltless in this matter, a fact that could hardly be kept secret from the children. No teacher had any real privacy. He lived in the same building as the children and was constantly under their observation.

"About one of us . . . At noon, Tiny (nickname of the ŠKID home manager) is in the habit of taking roll-call. Procedure is as follows: Tiny having gobbled down his five lunches, (teaching is rather a lucrative job), wipes his imaginary moustaches and . . ." (note: some teachers earned extras by giving private lessons to the children of cooks, bakers, etc., who paid the fees in the form of stolen food). (Quoted from VEDEM, October 15, 1943.)

HOW THE YOUNG PEOPLE SAW TEREZÍN The children saw everything in Terezín, and knew everything. Nothing in the lives of the grown-ups remained secret to them. If anyone had a different set of morals for himself and for the others, this did not escape their inquisitive eyes: cheating, thefts, pull, sexual immorality—the entire scale of Terezín moral life lay open before them like an instructive book, the reading of which was far more tempting and more amusing

than any fairy tales about good an evil. This was the natural consequence of abnormal social concentration.

"About ruses and strategems . . . I have formed the opinion that ruses or strategems are really not so bad, and that everybody needs them like food and drink. Many grown-ups laugh, but we all know that this is so . . ." (VEDEM February 10, 1943.)

"Pull. Many people in Terezín suffer from lack of vitamins. One has vitamin A deficiency, another complains that he does not get enough vegetables, but all these vitamins may be replaced by one vitamin alone. This is vitamin P-ull. Without pull one can hardly get by in Terezín, or keep alive, even if one were to take along a full case of vitamin C and other medicaments . . ." (VEDEM, May 22, 1943).

"Fear. Fear, mixed with anger, pity and hatred, fear of something that is drawing near and that you feel about you, something so painful and terrible that it tears and rends your heart. Fear of punishment for theft. Theft, thief, how terrible that sounds, how these two words hammer in your ears. But the others were stealing too, they are also thieves, and why was it only me, that was so foolish, so idiotic, why was it me that had to be caught? Why? Another two steps would have sufficed to get outside. It would have been enough to show an innocent face and pass on without taking any notice of anything, talking with a friend. It would have been enough to think logically. All my efforts, all that I had risked, has been lost. I did not even taste these dearly bought and still more dearly sold fruits. I wanted to give somebody pleasure, I wanted to take them to my mother, the more fool I. Peter Lax, did you really think you would bring them to her?—Well, never mind, at least I am wiser by one experience. I found out what life is. For life is risk." (Written by a fifteen-year-old boy after a true experience, VEDEM, August 23, 1943.)

HOW YOUNG PEOPLE SAW THEMSELVES Children are most critical towards one another, especially within the collective. There they mercilessly expose the slightest offence against the collective spirit or against the interests of the collective. They bare themselves in a way which is only possible, when man's individual "I" has become part of the collective "we". But they also know how to praise, point to model behavior and immediately pardon some trespass, if followed by some deserving deed.

"Praise and reproach . . . Male nurse B. probably got too proud because of all the praise he got. When little Weilik, who is ill, asked him to wash out his food tin, he brusquely refused. Such behaviour is wrong, and nobody may act in that way, even if he is off duty . . ."

" . . . Let us note the real self-sacrificing way, in which Švejk carries out the most unpleasant services for the sick. He really deserves at least some points in the competition . . ." (VEDEM December 31, 1942.)

"Why does not Segal ask his guardian for bread? Why does he take rather from other boys, when his guardian offers him some?" (January 22, 1943.)

" . . . Scores of children die of typhoid every day. Many others are taken sick every day. Nevertheless some selfish individuals calmly climb over the tables in

their boots, even if they have just come from the lavatory. Then somebody puts a piece of bread down on the table, and the worst happens. This is punishable carelessness, that may cause the death of a friend." (February 2, 1943.)

" . . . If you want to see a case of concentrated selfishness, watch Kakibus's behaviour. It is indeed amazing, how much egoism may be found in one human body. The above-mentioned skinflint . . . used the official issue of shoe polish, destined for those that have none, and put at least half a centimetre thick layer on his own boots . . ." (February 26, 1943.)

"Statement of the theatrical workers! Boys, in the name of all theatrical workers, we wish to apologize publicly to you in this way. We fully recognize our guilt. Each one of us worked on at least three or four jobs, and we do not have to tell you how things turned out . . . We promise, that nothing like it will ever occur again . . ." (March 2, 1943.)

"Why? Why are things not so tidy in the home, and why are affairs not run as smoothly as at the time when points were given? Why does nobody go and see their friends in the sick bay?" (April 9, 1943.)

"Bastion, the Terezín sports ground. When I was on the bastion for the first time, it was a sad sight. What bore the name of 'sports ground,' was a plain full of little lumps, on which a group of youngsters were working. Much water has passed under the bridge since then . . . Out of pure curiosity I went to have a look there again. And it was a wonderful sight, a beautiful sports ground . . . What I have written here is only a small indication that when adults say that the young people in Terezín know only how to pinch, they are wrong. The young people have learned something else here. They have learned to value manual work." (August 18, 1943.)

"Praise and reproach, . . . what is happening to Kahn, the weakest boy of our home, is cowardly and also dirty. You should not look only after cultural evenings, but see to such things as well, because what Kahn has to suffer is the opposite of any kind of culture." (October 29, 1943).

"Statement. I hereby admit publicly to each one in Home I, that I stole Ralph P.'s food ration card causing great unpleasantness not only for him but also for the entire home. I wish to apologize to him, to Professor E. and to everybody in the home, and promise that I will make up for it by better work and care for the home. B.K." (November 12, 1943.)

"Explanation. A few days ago, Jirka T. told me that he might be willing to buy two copy-books. Then we went to Bejček to suggest the price. He fixed three buns. Jirka agreed. I admit that I should not have sold the copy-books for such a price, and that it was wrong of me to accept that price. F.H." (December 3, 1943.)

" . . . This time we have to praise F.H. again. He willingly goes and fetches his colleagues' lunch, and asks nothing in return except the bigger sausage . . ." (December 10, 1943.)

CONCLUSION We should like to say in conclusion: it is not solely a matter of what moral offences, if any, adults and children committed in Terezín. The following, however, is important: the adult was aware of his abnormal situation

and when he returned home he quickly returned to the old norms he had departed from for a time. But not the child. A twenty-year-old man or woman today, who spent two or three years in a concentration camp, lacks for some act considered immoral by our society, not the knowledge of wrong-doing, which they acquired very quickly—but *the feeling of shame and guilt.* And these two factors, which are "the watchdogs of the behaviour we have learned to consider as correct and decent" (K. Young, *Social Psychology*, London 1946 p. 1943), are most important for moral judgment and moral life.

MORAL INFLUENCE OF THE ADULT Environment in Terezín influenced the morals of an adult as strongly as that of young people. The adult individual, however, arrived in Terezín fully "equipped" socially, with a developed personality. His place in society, i.e. the sum-total of his part, was more or less stable: his job, his place in the family, amidst his friends, a complex of interests. With his arrival, his personality came into direct conflict with the presence. And the more so, the stronger, the more monolithic, the more constant and better organized his personality was. His attitude is hostile, or at least sharply critical, towards the new reality. The more strongly he is anchored in the past, the more difficulty will he have in accommodating himself to the new conditions. A new system of values is formed with difficulty and never without confrontation with the past. His entire social memory forces him to this confrontation. He has firm roots from where he came. Even in his dreams he returns to his former environment, i.e. the unconscious element of his being struggles for a return to past conditions, revolts. And not only that: a grown-up in Terezín concentrates entirely on the future, which he can see in reality, though—influenced by the idealized past—perhaps too optimistically. The end of the war, the end of his sufferings, the end of life in camp, can in its concreteness give him extremely great physical and moral support. This fact is also expressed in his moral evaluation: he considers the complicated system of Terezín social structure as fictitious, is reluctant to accept the new, specifically Terezín evaluation of theft, cheating, etc.

It is here also, that we must look for the reason why Terezín was the domain of young people. People without strong roots in the past, immature, unattached, students, artisans who had only just finished apprenticeship, of doubtful existences. These people—led by a handful of outstanding personalities, sometimes, however of lower moral character—the class of the most capable, with the most initiative, most fit to survive, and also most satisfied. The further they were removed from this strata, both as to age group and stability of past social position, the more negative their attitude was to life in Terezín, the more critical and therefore also the slower the process of adaption to their new way of life.

MORAL INFLUENCE ON YOUTH And the young people? The past practically did not exist for them, for they could hardly remember it. Therefore no future existed for them, because they had nothing on which to base their concrete ideas. A high percentage of the persons under observation even today(*), at

(*) In 1948, when this was written. Ed. note.

the age of 18 to 22, have no clear idea of what they want to be or what they expect from life. We believe that one of the main reasons for this is the fact that during puberty, the time when the individuum is most tightly enclosed within himself, when the most courageous plans for future life are formed, they lived in an environment where no future existed for them. They have no criteria for the correctness of their actions, except what they receive from their parents, their pedagogues, the entire environment here—in Terezín—and now—during the war.

In this way, unhampered by the past, socially without roots, the young people get used to life in Terezín and adjust themselves without prejudice. They accept reality with small resistance, they form new values without great difficulty from existing conditions. They do not suffer by comparing with the past and create their image of the world according to the picture before their eyes.

From this stems the increased danger of moral blemish in boys and girls, whose personalities develop on such a doubtful, labile and rotten foundation.

Love

BY DAGMAR HILAROVA

I climb up
the rainbow of your eyes
and conquer distant worlds.
At the age of sixteen
one breaks through solitude
with closed eyes
so that he may see them
so that he may weigh them
in hands growing numb from waiting

My name was CV 90
OH yes, pleased to meet you
Whereto this evening
To the theatre
We must not do that, you know
not even to the Amsel concert
nowhere at all

This was our first encounter
at the transport assembly point
Instead of the neat handbag
a towering rucksack
He forgot to bring roses
He carried provisions
And then he said incidentally
We go the same way

At sixteen
one looks for violets beneath the snow
sings oneself to tears
and grieves about I don't know what.
It is such a foolish age
can't be avoided

What did he see in me
the eyes under a veil of hunger
were not even mine
my lips, with their lie
of freshness from chicory dye,
tasted their first kiss
What did he see in me
In the salon of the Heraklit attic
they produced models à la
Paris and Vienna – from unusual material,
blouses from towels, skirts from blankets.

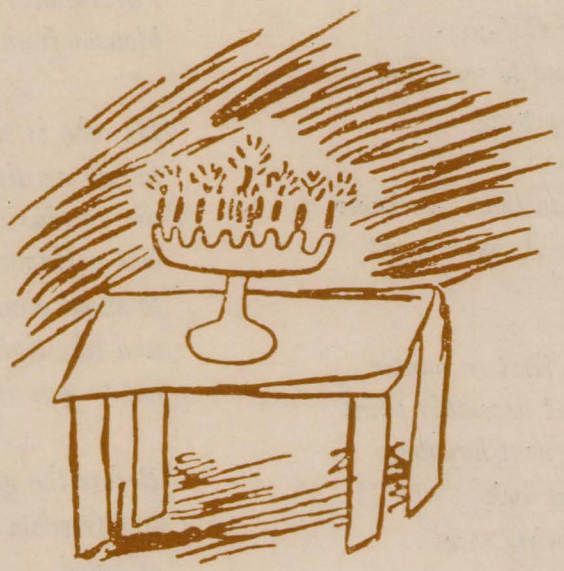
He who is sixteen wants
to live as did Wolker and
die as Hus died
like a flame stirring up oceans
to shout aloud the truth
and like lightning reveal direction
not to give in

Before the gates of the sleeping Ghetto
lies freedom
crippled
out of reach
freedom
without freedom

I climb up
the rainbow of your eyes
storming bastions of stars escaping
from painful in horrors consoling Ascension
I am in love

I. LAUSCHEROVÁ

THE CHILDREN OF TEREZÍN



One of us
will teach these children how to sing again,
to write on paper with a pencil,
to do sums and multiply.
One of us
is sure to survive.

Dr. Karel Fleischmann, Terezín 1942

Time: June 1945
Place: Prague, the headmaster's study at the school in Charvát Street
Cast: The Headmistress—two members of the staff—a mother who had been a teacher in the Terezín Ghetto, the Jewish concentration camp, I beg your pardon, not a teacher but a sort of governess—all teaching was forbidden—Eva, a small girl who looked barely six years old, but was in fact eight and a half—lanky Frank, her ten-year-old friend.

Both children were attending school for the first time. They were inquisitively looking at the pictures, captions, maps. They consciously took in the characteristic atmosphere of school which they had never known before. Both children seemed quite self-confident, they were neither shy nor frightened. They did not know what it was to be frightened of examinations, nor had they experienced the artificially maintained distance between teacher and pupil. Their nurses, and the matrons of the children's home had been called by their first name or by a nickname. They had been older friends rather than teachers.

After formal registration, the children went to a classroom to sit for an examination. Then they would be put into classes according to results. From September on they would attend school. They would have books, copybooks, a pencil-box, pen, sketch book, a pencil, crayons and a satchel! A satchel. And maybe even an eraser. What joy! . . . For those who had not lived through it do not know what it is to have a bit of paper that can be used at least on one side. Those who have not lived through it do not know what it is to own a tiny bit of pencil, cannot realise what our children had to go without.

Late, my dear child, but still, your ardent wish will come true: "When I go to school . . .," all your plans had begun with these words ever since you were four. All your Terezín sentences beginning with "when . . .," "when I go to the park with Manka . . .," "when I have . . .." Only your granny, who had so much looked forward to taking her little girl to school in a pleated skirt and a white blouse with a schoolbag on her back, did not live to see the day. She is no longer with us. MAIDANEK! Her last thoughts were surely for you, my little schoolgirl, before she drew her last breath that suffocated her in the gas-filled mobile death chamber.

The school in Charvát Street was a selective school, registering pupils on examination. In the classroom twenty children were waiting for their exam. They were quickly reviewing as much as they could. One boy was repeating the spelling rules, another was asking a third one what "object" meant. In a corner a mother was going through the multiplication tables with her little daughter who always forgot how much seven times eight is. They were all older than you, my little Eva. You entered sure of yourself, and when one of the girls asked you "Are you frightened?" you looked surprised, first at me and then at her and wondered: "What of?"

The teacher came in, put you in a desk and said: "Just wait a bit. I shall first have a look at the other children and then we two shall have a chat. I shall also give you a dictation and you will take it down. Now you can draw a bit or write something. Here is some paper for you." She started with a dictation for the fifth form, the fourth class wrote an essay on "My Favourite Toy." Eva wrote the

dictation with the big children. Then she carefully underlined the subject, the simple subject with a double-line, the predicate with a wavy line, the simple predicate with a double wavy line, as she was used to from the Terezín children's home. Then she wrote an essay about her monkey Ferda and her doll Ruth which she—prisoner No. CK 539—had carried the three kilometres from the Bohušovice station to Terezín, in her pack with her potty. Afterwards she did some sums, took an active part in the oral examination so that actually she herself was never examined at all.

After the exams were over the headmistress sent the parents home and told them to come back in three days, when the results would be up on the board.

She asked the mother from Terezín to come alone to her office. Then, going through the examination papers, she shook her head: "Tell me, how is it possible that the two Terezín children—you will forgive me for calling them that, it is not meant in discrimination—have the best results of all the nineteen children? That little girl has done excellently in all questions set for the fifth form, not a single mistake in the dictation, even all the commas in the essay are correct . . ., both children have a logical approach to mathematical problems . . . the examiners were struck by their amazing capacity for graphic illustration and the complete assurance with which the children replied. But do you know what surprised us most? Look at that! The children were to write some names of Bohemian rivers and mountains. On the average, they wrote six to eight names. Eva and Frank both did the same. They drew a square—Bohemia. The contours of Bohemia before Munich! Promontories, mountains, rivers. There is the Elbe with its tributaries, the mountain ranges with their highest peaks and here a circle to mark the mountain Říp. Normally, ten-year-old children who have attended school regularly do not know that. How is that possible?" "The other children attended school in the Protectorate. A school with an officially imposed curriculum. We took the risk. We were not allowed to teach, but we did. We drew up the syllabus ourselves as we knew and thought best in accordance with the oath sworn when we took our degree. And the mountain Říp? We could see that from the window of the attic where we lived. It was a symbol for us."

HOW IS IT POSSIBLE THAT . . . That question used to be the beginning of long and frequent talks. It kept cropping up on different occasions, in different ways, with different teachers, headmasters, psychologists. Mrs Zelenková, the headmistress in Charvát School, a worthy successor of Dr. Černý, who had been killed by a bullet in the back during the last executions in May at the Small Fortress in Terezín, was very interested in the lives of our children at Terezín. She always wanted to hear facts, not the fictitious "Dichtung und Wahrheit."

TEREZÍN: Terezín lies in a basin, an artificially constructed fortress with ramparts and walls that you cannot see until you stand before them.

Dry statistics say: more than 15,000 children passed through the Terezín Ghetto, only about a hundred have returned.

What lies behind these figures?

Terrible hygienic conditions in the overcrowded township where one had to go

carefully even on water for washing, where hot water was an unheard of luxury and a small cake of soap the ration for six weeks.

A shortage of the most primitive facilities for maintaining the basic principles of hygiene.

A shortage of food, nothing to fill your stomach with, let alone the proper nutritional value.

Overcrowded living-quarters. Overcrowded streets. A human ant-heap which seemed to lack organization and purpose. At the beginning there was dirt, fleas, bedbugs, lice, mice, rats. It goes without saying that infectious diseases were rampant in such an atmosphere: impetigo, acute conjunctivitis, serious cases of hepatitis, dysentery, typhoid fever, inflammation of the smallest wound, often panaritia, serious gastric catarrhs, grave cases of measles, scarlet fever, diphtheria, mumps, lots of sties, different forms of tuberculosis, and so on and so forth.

Terezín—a closed-in fortress with nothing but bare walls.

No butterflies fluttered there, no trees grew there, no flowers blossomed. But children did live there. Children and young people—prisoners like you and me. Did they live? Yes, they did.

And how did they live? Some of them lived with their mothers in barracks or blocks. Most of them separately in homes for children or young people. Of course these homes were the most primitive kind of what psychologists call a nest. According to the size of the room, eight or twelve up to eighteen children, or teenage boys or girls lived there, together with their nurse or tutor. Several of such homes formed one unit, a children's block with a social welfare worker, a sick bay with a nursing staff, in larger blocks a surgery, a doctor and the management of the home. The girls lived next to the church in the former military headquarters while the boys were accommodated on the other side. Some boys were also put up in the former Terezín school, the smaller children in the square in L 218, in the former post office. For some time, at the beginning of 1943, homes for mothers with children of school-age were set up in former private houses on cross streets (Qu) and streets running lengthwise (L), (until the "Verschönerungsaktion", i.e. the arrival of the International Commission, streets had no names, only numbers). The Jugendfürsorge, the department for youth care of the ghetto self-government soon abandoned this arrangement. In Terezín there was an infant home where mothers, mostly employed in the home, lived with their babies. If you imagine a home of glass and concrete, full of sunshine and flowers, bright colours and white cots, you are wrong. It was an old house in a former Austrian garrison town with narrow passages and cold dampness permeating the walls and floors. Bunk stood next to bunk and a primitive box for the child beside. That's how it was at first. But much had been done to create something out of nothing, for there were many who could perform miracles.

If you are looking for a row of baby carriages to take the children for an airing, you are looking in vain. At best, our babies had wooden boxes. And what luxury when they were on wooden wheels! How much bread—the Terezín currency—did the young mother have to give of her own meagre ration to get hold of such a carriage for her baby! It was, however, better than in the barracks. It was warmer there in winter, there was a sort of kitchenette—a "Wärmeküche" for heat-

ing up food, a possibility to wash and dry nappies or rather the rags which served as nappies.

There was marvelous solidarity among the mothers, and the social welfare worker was like an older sister who would advise and help them and settle any differences that might arise. And now, when we meet, from time to time, we do not think of the darkness of the Terezín camp but remember only the things, the devotion and the self sacrifice.

Naturally, the German Command, later called Dienststelle Theresienstadt, the command of the spa "welches der Führer in seiner Güte den Juden geschenkt hat" (which the Führer, in his goodness of heart, has given the Jews)—tried to prevent birth. At the beginning, it was permitted to give birth to a child conceived before being transported to Terezín. If conception took place in Terezín, abortion was ordered. Jewish doctors—prisoners—had to make check-ups, report pregnancy and carry out abortions. From the end of 1943 onwards, pregnant women and mothers with babies were included in transports. Women who came to Terezín already pregnant had to have an abortion. Only 25 children born in Terezín, about one fifth of the live-born children survived Hitler's extermination camps.

There was a toddlers' home in Terezín. One of my former pupils worked there and I often went to see her. The children suffered from many psychical troubles and complaints: bad, frequently interrupted sleep, great loss of weight, more than the nourishment would account for, bitter weeping, bed-wetting. It took a long time before the toddlers got used to playing again. What did they play with? With a bit of wood, a rag. The children were apathetic, depressed, or too lively in turn. Often they even repulsed their own mothers when they came to see them after work. How could the little mites understand that they did not leave their children of their own free will?

Children of school age went through similar initial troubles. They slowly got used to the new environment, they were homesick, it was hard for them to get over the separation from their parents, brothers and sisters living in a different home because they were of a different sex, or because the age difference between them was considerable. Wherever it was possible we tried to keep brothers or sisters together.

For a long time the children could not get over the hardships of the transport, the horrors of the assembly points like that at the Fair pavilion in Prague, the violent waking at night, the shouts of the SS supermen, the journey, the march from Bohušovice, the Schleuse (reception centre). Most of them were shy, intimidated, on the other hand some were aggressive—a reaction to the changed situation, missing what had been and infected by the fear of the adults concerning what was to come.

Conditions for education were hard. Systematic work was constantly interrupted by new transports and departures of children and tutors for the East. Most of the tutors were truly angels. They did not choose their Terezín jobs for material reasons. Work among children did not entitle them to extra bread rations (Schwerarbeiterzulage) or any other privileges. To be matron in a home meant to be on call for twenty-four hours a day, to sleep with the children, to get up at night and wake Rudy to prevent him from wetting his pallet, half an hour later Charles for the same reason, to rinse Mike's inflamed eyes, to give a pill to Freddy, to change Tommy's compress. There were many sick children in every room. Here again, matron

had to sit down at the bunk of a restless sleeper and stroke his brow to prevent him from waking and frightening the others with his cries. During the day she had to look after the children's cleanliness, their rations, distribute them, get a voucher for shoe repairs, take a child to the surgery, get hold of some medicaments, beg for a little yeast in the bakery, the best medicament for all the numerous sties, in short to care for the children's mental and physical, I wanted to say, well-being. Of course, this expression is an exaggeration. To be more exact, to look after the most essential needs of our children. It is interesting and understandable that the children loved the sick bay. There, they were better off. How many of those who have returned still cherish thoughts of the women who were like mothers to them, how many more did not return, but took their memories with them.

Dr. René Bittner, a young graduate of the Vienna University, student of Charlotte Bühler, started organizing work with youth immediately after the arrival of the first transport that held children. Dr. Bittner had fled from Vienna to Prague when the Nazi army was approaching the Austrian capital. In Prague she wanted to wait for her emigration papers. Her family was able to emigrate legally from Vienna. René was overtaken in Czechoslovakia by the occupation and caught in the Nazi machinery. Arrested for exchanging a few words with a Czech gendarme —an underground contact from Prague—in a side street of Terezín then still inhabited by civilians, she was included as punishment in an East-bound transport from which there was no return. At that time, work with children was still more difficult than at the time of my arrival at the end of 1942. They were not allowed out in the streets, only on Sundays they were marched, two abreast under gendarmerie escort, to see their mothers in the women's quarters and then to their fathers in the men's barracks. Children, the feared enemies of the thousand-year Reich, marching under armed escort.

The organization of the needs of youth was in the hands of a special department of the self government, that of the Jugendfürsorge. The first Judenältester, Jacob Edelstein, fully understood the needs of the young. The different extras for our children under terribly hard conditions were all due to his efforts. Unknown to the Germans, he cut the rations of the adults to increase those of the children. During my visit in Israel I often heard the reproach—why had the aged not been considered more. "Honour your father . . ."—those who have not lived under Terezín conditions are perhaps unable to understand. We shall always honour your memory, dear friend of our youth, shot by the Nazis in Auschwitz after having been forced to witness the execution of your son and the annihilation of your wife. Edelstein wanted to preserve the young ones and keep them from physical and mental harm, knowing that a nation lives on in her children.

Jugendfürsorge was not a bureaucratic office in the large "Magdeburg" barracks, it was a centre concentrating all the threads of youth care. This was not a place where bureaucrats worked but people of great sensibility who knew how to produce something out of nothing under terribly difficult conditions. The great philosopher Dr. Leo Baeck, the aged rabbi of Berlin, was the last head of the Jugendfürsorge. He devoted his years in Terezín to child care and to the workers of the Jugendfürsorge he was an inspiration, encouragement, a real father.

The Jugendfürsorge was in charge of establishing homes, looked after juvenile em-

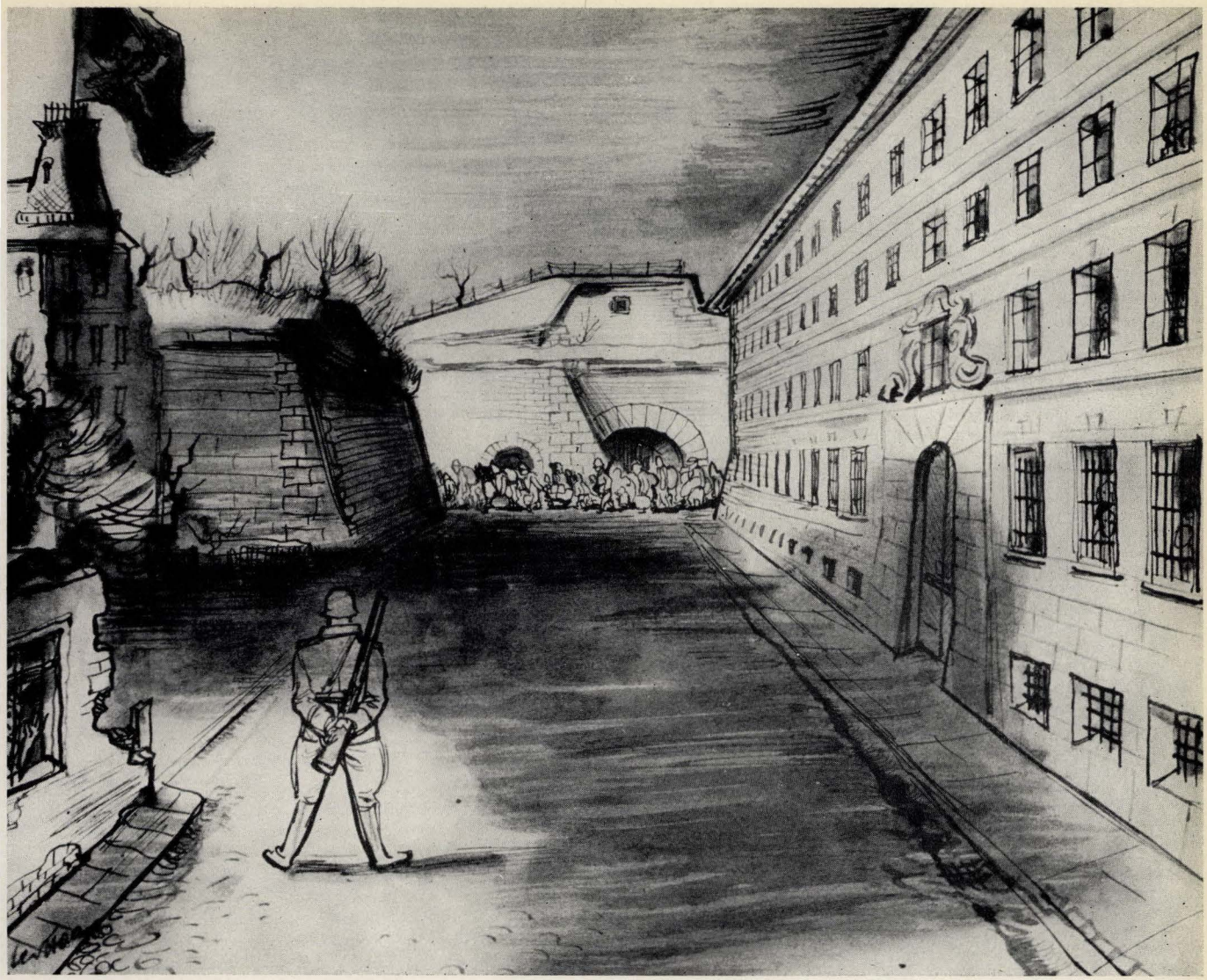
ployment and the library, supervised the prohibited education, gave out extra rations, clothing, vouchers for laundry, for baths, for repairs, for extras for the sick—in short, it looked after all aspects of the mental and physical needs of the young.
The older children had to work according to the order of the day, from the age of sixteen, in fact from fourteen years and after the depopulation of Terezín due to the autumn transports in 1944, even twelve-year-olds were put to work. They were included in the regular working process. They mostly worked in agriculture and gardens. The latter were not called Jugendgärten because vegetables for children were grown there, but because the young ones slaved in them. But even so they were the best places of work, because they were in the open air and beyond the ghetto gates. Pinching vegetables was severely punished but now and then a carrot, radish, kohlrabi or apple found its way into the stomachs of the ever-starving children. They also worked in production, however, in the health service and in the kitchens and bakeries.
Here, too, any kind of teaching was banned. But we kept on learning and teaching. How was it done without any teaching aids? We wrote the textbooks for the first grade from memory and we still had enough energy left for lively discussions about methods of elementary teaching, the whole-word versus phonetic. In the end everyone taught as he had been used to, or as he knew best. I shall never forget two whole-word readers for the first form which later got lost in the disinfection. Ruda Ohrenstein had written and illustrated them for me. In Prague as well as in Terezín the children read: "This is a dog. This is a cat. The dog is running. The cat is running."
A dog. The children of Terezín saw only one dog there, a large Alsatian that always bared its teeth. It always accompanied its master riding on horseback through Terezín. The camp commander was a great "sportsman and hunter". For example, he chased to death Titelmann, the teacher walking on the ramparts with the children and explaining the four cardinal points to them. "Saujud, lauf!" He roared flipping his hunting crop until Titelmann sank to the ground exhausted. The dog held the fallen man down with its paws. "To the cell with him!" He was sent East with the next transport. Was it for his shock of ginger hair that Seidl disliked him, or for his ascetic appearance, his deepset, questioning eyes in his hollow face?
Once again we started a reader for the first class. This time it was for tuberculous children from Vienna. We could not finish it together. I had to cut out pictures by Aleš from an old primer that I found and try to write it myself step by step. My fellow-worker had left. And so I can only gratefully remember all those starving, weakened, much suffering people who, exhausted after ten hours of daily slavery understood the needs of the children and helped to create a more human atmosphere for them. My thanks go out also to the nameless men working as joiners, builders, decorators and health workers, for their understanding and helpfulness. It is only their names that are forgotten, not the people themselves, nor their numerous acts of kindness and love. We taught. The older children assembled after work, solving equations, studying literature. In one home a former engineer, a dustman in Terezín, explained physics in a very interesting way, in another home they were drawing, or modelling or discussing problems of esthetics. In still another home F.





22 Camp Commander (Leo Haas)

21 The Terezín church (unknown Artist)



23 The transport has arrived (Leo Haas)

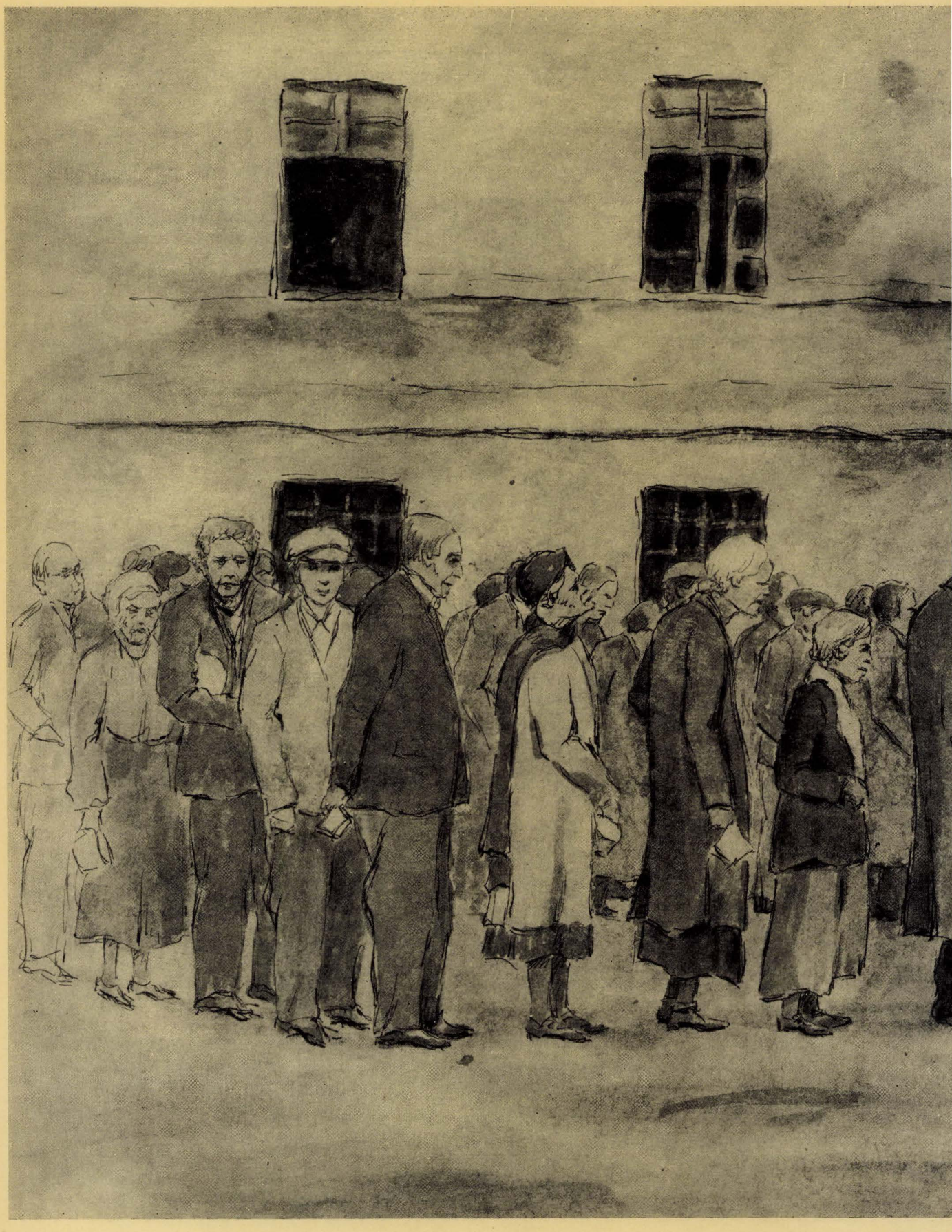


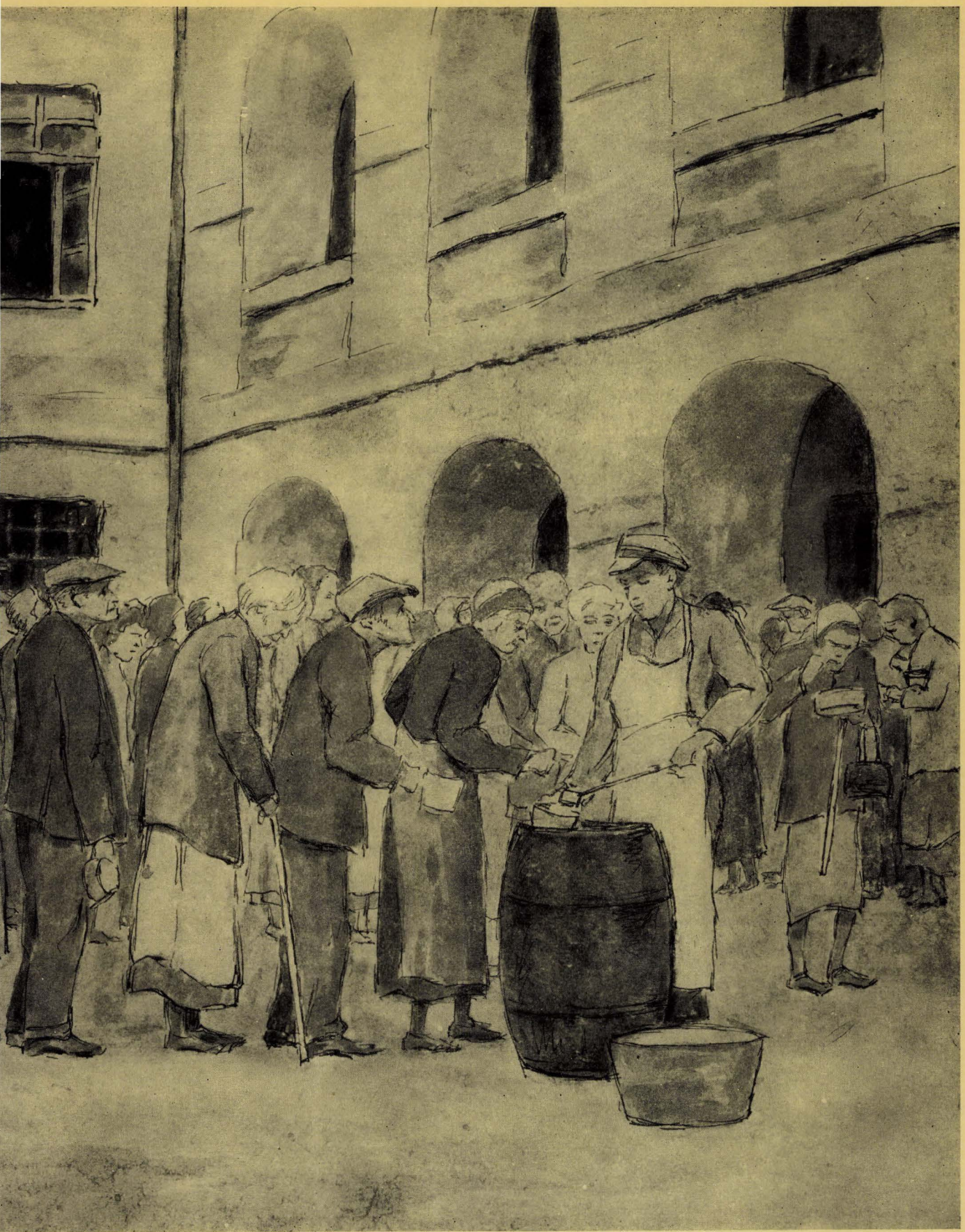
24 Transport to the East (Leo Haas)



25 Religious services (Leo Haas)

26 The menage (Malvina Schalková)







27 The Ghetto-Swingers (Leo Haas)

of special soup and much joy to an old German whose son had been a fellow worker of her father's? The son had been sent with a transport to the East. The almost blind old man was lying in the sick bay of the "Dresden" barracks. And one day the girl asked him: "May I call you grandfather? You have no little girl and I have no granddad." The old man was very moved when he spoke about it. I shall never forget the picture of the childish hand in the wrinkled, calloused hand of the blind old man. The friendship lasted until the adopted grandfather was sent East. He cannot have arrived alive, for his condition was already very bad when he was carried on a stretcher to the assembly place. But his adoptive granddaughter has never forgotten her Terezín grandfather.

Chanuka was approaching. At the Children's home, children's fingers were making simple animals, dolls and balls from rugs and bits of wool. Our boys were making a box of bricks and carts out of bits of wood. We were preparing a surprise for the toddlers to whom we were taking our handiwork. A young brunette with sallow skin, dark rings under her eyes, probably tuberculosis, said: "You want to give pleasure, how long, for how long, and what is going to happen tomorrow? . . ." We were petrified.

A simple woman, a hard-working mother of three children aged six and a half, four and two, threw back her cropped head: "Today, Marta, you are still here in Terezín. We exist, we live and here our children must feel that we love them. A home does not mean a table, chairs and a wardrobe in Holice, home means love. And here, I feel that the children belong to me much more. Their father works in the mines, perhaps he will come back. My older girl is in L 218 (school children's home), we meet only for a while in the evenings, the little ones are with me but we all belong together. Don't think about what is going to happen, think only of what there is now and stand firmly in the little bit of space you have." Such people gave us strength.

After the normal ten-hour working day I hurried to the windows of the isolation hospital where our little six-year-old daughter lay. She had never been at school and had learned to write by herself. Now she was writing charming letters to her parents which nurse Hana handed over after pressing them with a hot iron. Her letter today "the doctor knows best and the nurses are good to us" threw light on the real situation.

In January 1943 some violent gastric infection broke out among the Terezín children. Views differed. The old inhabitants did not take it so seriously: "We are in Terezín," they said. Doctor Era Klapp, the chief physician of the central hospital, realized the danger of the situation when he diagnosed typhoid fever in the children's home. He ordered strict quarantine until the results of the bacteriological tests in Prague would be known. The whole night the little patients were being moved, not by ambulances but by two stretcher bearers, to the quickly established isolation hospital in the square. There was still some doubt about what had caused our Eva's temperature. I stayed at her bedside till curfew. Her temperature was 40° C (40° C = 104° Fahrenheit). Father came to see her early in the morning but her bed was empty. They had taken her away and nobody knew where to. For some hours we did not know where our little girl was. There was no record yet of her having been moved, and in the hospitals they shrugged their shoulders.

In such a state of mind parents had to go to work. At last we knew. She was in the isolation ward of the newly established children's hospital. Information was not given by the doctors until the afternoon, which meant endless hours of waiting. I was standing in a queue below the windows. In the window the doctor spoke briefly and to the point. But a mother wanted to hear more than the brief "40° Fiber, Bild unklar, Typhus, Masern, Scharlach, Mischinfektion" (fever, diagnosis uncertain whether typhoid fever, measles, scarlet fever or a combined infection). A wave of the hand and it was the next mother's turn. It took me longer than my clever girl to realize the wonderful self-sacrifice and the kindness behind the rough manner. Doctor Schaffa knew his business. He understood children and loved them. His devotion was without bounds. In Brno he had been a scientist working in diphtheria research, in Terezín as the doctor in chief he was the heart and soul of the hospital. He knew of every pin, just as he knew of the physical and mental state of each patient. He examined them, made his diagnosis, ordered treatment, cut bread and distributed it himself to the children so that not a crumb would be wasted and none of the staff take any at the expense of the children. He turned the courtyard of a former private house of the Terezín garrison into a garden where he grew camomile and other herbs, as well as vegetables for the children, and poppies to have opium for medical purposes. He walked all night with little Olly in his arms, who had pneumonia, saving her from certain death. Her mother will never forget it, though he saved the child only for the Auschwitz gas-chamber. Dr. Schaffa was the chief physician who made the Germans give him planks to build a rest room for tubercular children. The carpenter, the father of a little girl, the locksmith, father of a boy, the joiner, another father, were glad to go there and help after a day's exhausting work. Father Sattler brought his fiddle to entertain the children. What could I, a women with unskilled hands, bring as a thanksgiving, how could I help?

And one day, below the window, I finally took heart and asked: "Doctor, the children are there for months; could I come and teach them after work, in my spare time?" He understood. Three times a week I came with my books, going from bed to bed, from Anna to Eva, from Eva to Ruth, to Marta, to Horst, to Beda. It was a new kind of work. A new experience, teaching in hospital, which is now a matter of course in Czechoslovakia's medical institutions. And again I came up against the thirst for knowledge increased many fold in the children's hospital.

There were children from different countries, and no problems of nationality arose among the smaller kids. Among the twelve to fourteen-year-olds there were nationality quarrels that had to be settled. We were successful. They got used to one another, they got to know one another. They saw suffering and death. They realized that we were all in one boat together.

The spring evenings used to be beautiful. We had long talks and discussions, confronting causes and results. The reason why we were here behind locks and bars. Differences disappeared between those from Bohemia, the Reich, Austria and Denmark. They all sang in Czech with great conviction: "Až nás půjdou milióny, všichni proti větru" (Till there are millions of us all braving the wind).

There were two kinds of orphans in Terezín. The children from the orphanages and the so-called Terezín orphans whose parents had illegally left the occupied

country to be followed by a legal children's transport to the then mandate of Palestine. The "Auswanderungsamt" suddenly called off the deal and the children got stuck in the Nazi trap.

In Terezín there was not much difference between children with or without parents; childless families or single women took charge of the orphans. Even the orphans had somewhere to go in the evenings, they had their adoptive parents and there was a mother who made a cake for them from her ration of buns, synthetic coffee and margarine. They, too, had someone to surprise them on their birthday or Jewish holidays. They, too, had someone to give a small present to, a little drawing, a bookmarker, and someone to invite to the party in the children's home.

A transport of destitute children arrived in Terezín. They had been travelling alone, without supervision. Now they were here, dirty, soiled, lice-infested. Their underwear stuck to their scab-covered bodies. A shower-bath was being prepared for them. The children refused to enter it. They had come from the East, they knew more than we did. On the German Command's order they lived separately. Only the staff were allowed to go there, picked members of the teaching and medical staff. They were chosen according to two criteria. The best and most conscientious workers who had no family in Terezín. So that they might quickly recover, these privileged children received bigger rations and new clothes. Shortly after, a rumour spread through Terezín: the children together with their staff would be sent to a neutral country. They went to Auschwitz.

In the spring of 1944, on order of the German Command, the orphans and Terezín orphans had to prepare for transport. Many adoptive parents fought for their wards. Only a few of them were successful.

Cultural life in Terezín was rich indeed. Only, transports to the East kept interrupting all activities. Among the prisoners there were world-famous artists and talented beginners who became real artists in Terezín. The saying "Inter arma tacent musae" was not valid here. The department organizing cultural events was called "Freizeitgestaltung," it did not, however, distract attention from stark reality and the shadow of the gallows. The cultural life of the Jews from Bohemia and Moravia was an expression of their convictions, offering education and moral support.

The artists liked to come among the youngsters. They never underestimated the experience gained there.

We came to the sick bay of the children's home L 218 on the invitation of the chief-physician. At a meeting of the Jugendfürsorge the nurse had complained of the depressed atmosphere there. She said that the children's mental state was much worse than their physical condition, though for Terezín, they had an exceptionally nice environment. Clean, distempered walls, cots, pillows, blankets in white covers. A few people arranged to try out something. They prepared an afternoon of entertainment. We entered the first room. There were twelve beds with twelve pale children, their dull eyes without interest, they hardly raised them to see who had come in. No gay "hallo," hardly an answer to our greeting. Faded flowers, that was our first thought. The situation in the next room was not much different. It was a shocking sight, especially in surroundings luxurious for Terezín. What was the reason? We adults were a little frightened. Even the temperamental

Nora — Norbert Frýd — started off on an uncertain note. The children's eyes hardly opened when Nora began. Instead of telling a story he started with his favourite song "Dalai lama z Tibetu v roztrhaném baretu." He sang with lively gestures stamping his feet to the rhythm. The first smiles appeared on pale lips, little voices joined in the chorus, little fingers beat the rhythm on the beds. The sickroom was full of laughter and the healthy children behind the doors were sorry they were not allowed in and sat on the floor of the passage together with the staff— Nora had won all along the line.

I wonder, wherher he, the successful writer, ever had a more grateful audience than the children in sick bay of L 218 to whom he brought new life. For a long time the children used to draw and sing, and again and again lived through the successful afternoon and looked forward to others. Whenever I remember his "radio-wave" my heart warms. I still feel comforted and I am surely not the only one.

I wonder if Mrs Alice Hertzová-Sommerová in far-off Jerusalem, where she teaches at a conservatory, remembers her activities in Terezín. She is an excellent music-teacher who used to teach a few talented children on the old piano in the town hall after her morning shift or before the afternoon shift in the mica workshop. That was not enough for her, however. More young people had to be taught. Thus concerts for youths started. Late in the afternoon on Saturdays she would sit down to the piano among her silent listeners. She played a motif, explained it, another few bars, again explanations, and finally an artistically perfect rendering of the music for her young listeners.

Outside it was a cold, drizzly, late autumn day of 1944. The aftermath of the leave-taking with those who had gone East in September and October was still felt. In the auditorium of the Terezín Town Hall troubles and hardships were suddenly forgotten. From the piano there came the calls of the cuckoo. Novák's composition granted a moment of forgetfulness, evoking the illusion of spring, of trees in blossom, blue skies, a promise of a new joyful spring, a spring in liberty.

We also heard a children's opera in Terezín. Rudy Freudenfeld's children's choir performed Hoffmeister's "Brundibár," set to music by Krása. And no less than František Zelenka, the well-known theatrical designer, proved his great art by making charming sets out of nothing.

Váva Šanová, today a leading member of the Haifa City Theatre, dramatized and rehearsed Karafiát's favourite children's book *Broučci* (Fire-flies). I am sure that some of the children who are now about thirty, still know whole passages from "Fire-flies" by heart. The last performance of "Fire-flies" was held in the Sokol Hall, which had been given over for cultural use, for a short time, to make the International Red Cross Commission see with their own eyes that the rumours about murdered children were false and that there were so many children in Terezín.

I, too, had to play-act. I received black, high-heeled pumps, a fairly smart suit, a light dress and white coat. Those were my properties. We had to take a certain path where the Commission again and again caught a glimpse of some children—it was all make-believe.

Evenings of recitals, poetry, dramatized works of national and Terezín authors and folklore gave strength to endure, creating an atmosphere of solidarity and fellow feeling. The poem by J. Webrová became a hit.

You and I are friends
You and I are fond of each other
We met in Terezín,
It was there that we shook hands.
And you and I are friends,
That we shall never forget.

You and I are friends,
You and I are fond of each other.
One day we shall walk out through the open gates,
The night will pass, the sun will shine again.
You and I are friends.
That we shall never forget.

Behind ramparts and walls, behind casemates and fortifications, in the narrow symmetrical little streets, the Qu (cross streets) and L (lengthwise), in blocks made out of houses whose walls and fences separating the yards had been knocked down, in blocks with a single exit, behind locked gates, among the crowds of aged, starving, lamenting people, clad in rags, there were children. They grew fast, too quickly leaving their childhood behind. Their growing up was accompanied by the hollow sound of nailed boots of the masters of subjugated Europe, the roar of the tractor of the German Polliak.

Hardly any Terezín prisoners lost their dignity. They never forgot, even in dirt, in rags, vermin infested, the 15,000 children from Bohemia and made every effort to save them. And the names of those who did not return, inscribed on the walls of the Pinkas Synagogue, are not mere inscriptions, have not dissolved in the smoke of the crematoria—they are our pledge: Not to forget. We, who have come through the Nazi hell, have to stand on guard against any kind of fascism or racial hatred. Let this reminiscence, which is to bear witness to faith in life, freedom, fellowship, be also a warning.

I should like to conclude with the mother's words from Kraus's "Die letzten Tage der Menschheit." Watching the violent death of her child she called out to the henchmen:

Dass nie, durch alle Tage, die ihr schändet,
sich euer Blick von diesem Bilde wendet!
Und seid am Ende ihr der Höllenfahrt,
bleibt euch erst dieser Anblick aufgespart.
Die Splitter dieser edlen Kinderstirn,
sie bohren sich in euer Herz und Hirn!
Lebt lang, und euer ewiger Begleiter sei
durch eure Nächte dieser Mutterschrei!

FROM THE DIARIES OF TEREZÍN CHILDREN

HELGA KINSKY

OLGA WEISSOVÁ-HOŠKOVÁ

CHARLOTTA VEREŠOVÁ



EXCERPTS FROM THE TEREZÍN DIARY OF TWELVE-YEAR-OLD HELGA KINSKY OF VIENNA:

Tuesday, March 16, 1943
". . . I went to see my uncle in the Sudeten barracks and there I saw them throw out potato peelings and ten people threw themselves on the little pile and fought for them . . ."

Friday, April 2, 1943
"This day is filled with joy. The Germans themselves admit their losses at the front. This afternoon I moved to another bunk, in the bottom tier next to Ella Steiner. I'm happy. I had an unpleasant neighbour, Marta Kenderová, who always scolded me if I sat on her bunk . . ."

Tuesday, April 6, 1943
"Tomorrow SS-man Guenther is coming and no children can go out on the street tomorrow. Daddy doesn't know this and I'll die of hunger by evening . . ."

Wednesday, April 7, 1943
"I missed Daddy yesterday, but I didn't give in to my sadness, because the other children couldn't see their parents either and won't see them all day."

Saturday, April 10, 1943
"We aren't allowed to go out of the barracks. We can't go into the street without a pass and children don't get a pass. They say this can last a week or even several months. I thought I wouldn't see Daddy for a long time, but he has been to see me twice. I seem like a bird in a cage. This is all because two prisoners escaped from the ghetto . . ."

Thursday, May 6, 1943
"It's terrible here in Terezín. A regular Tower of Babel. There are Germans, Austrians, Czech, Dutch, some French, I even know a Finnish girl, etc. There are Aryans, Jews and mixed. Next to my bunk there was a girl Antonie Michalová to whom fate was very cruel. She arrived three weeks ago from Brno; her father is an Aryan and her mother Jewish. She is completely alone, badly provided for, and does not feel right in a Jewish environment. She cries almost all day long. Her father was allowed to accompany her to Prague, where there was a terrible leave-taking, according to the account of a girl who came with her."

Saturday, July 31, 1943
"This is the second day I've been sleeping in the corridor because of bedbugs. There are seven of us girls sleeping outside and we've all been bitten.

"The Germans cleared out the 'Sudeten' and 'Zeughaus' barracks in 48 hours. I saw the moving. I imagine it's like a retreat in war. All the streets were given names. We have permission to sleep in the garden, because it's impossible in the corridor. Spraying with Flit didn't help at all. I caught six fleas and three bedbugs today. Isn't that a fine hunt? I don't even need a gun and right away I have supper. A rat slept in my shoe. Walter, our Hausältester, killed it. Now I'm going to pitch a tent for the night with Ella and Irča."

Thursday, August 26, 1943

"It's terrible here now. There is a great deal of tension among the older, sensible children. They are going to send transports to a new ghetto—into the unknown.

"And something else, 1,500 children will arrive tonight. They are from Poland. We are making toys and little bags and nets for them, etc.

"I have diarrhea. Of 27 children, 19 have diarrhea and 16 are sick in bed. Two toilets for 100 children aren't enough, when there is infectious diarrhea in every 'Heim'.

"What those toilets look like!!!"

Friday, August 17, 1943

"The children came at three this morning. They are full of lice. They only have what they are wearing. We are collecting things for them."

Saturday, September 4, 1943

"Tomorrow they load the transport. From our room only Zdeňka is going so far. They are sending them in several batches. Zdeňka is acting very bravely. Each reports in the home where he lives and then at the Sammlungstelle they meet with their family. There are several Sammlungstellen. Zdeňka's is in the Hamburg barracks in the first courtyard, where there are 500 people."

Sunday, September 5, 1943

"This was a day, but it's all over now. They are already in the 'šlojska.' From our room Pavla, Helena, Zdeňka, Olila and Popinka are going.

"Everyone gave Zdeňka something, she's such a poor thing. I gave a half loaf of bread, a can of meat paste, linden tea and sugar. Her father came to pack her things and Zdeňka gave him bread, sugar and a tomato. He didn't want to take it, but we made him and said that we would bring Zdeňka some more food. He wept and thanked the children and the assistants for the care they had given Zdeňka. We all cried. Her father, mother, and brother didn't even have a bit of bread. We fixed them up so that from having nothing they had in a little while a full little suitcase and a small bag full of food.

"At six in the evening they reported for the transport. Each one somewhere else. The parting was hard. After eight in the evening I went to look for Zdeňka. She was sitting on her luggage and she cried and laughed at the same time, she was so happy to see someone before she left. I slept all night, but I had terrible dreams and had rings under my eyes in the morning."



28 Teaching in secret (child drawing by H. Weissová-Hošková)



29 Transport to the East (H. Weissová-Hošková)



30 Bread distribution (H. Weissová-Hošková)

Monday, September 6, 1943

"I got up at six to see Zdeňka again. When I came up to the Hamburg barracks the last people were just going through the back gates and getting on the train. Everything was boarded up all around so no one could get to them and so they could not run away. I jumped over, ran up to the last people going through the gates. I saw the train pulling away and in one of the cars Zdeňka was riding away."

EXCERPTS FROM THE DIARY OF HELGA WEISSOVÁ-HOŠKOVÁ

. . . Three young boys ran away. For that we have already had a week of "Kasernensperre" and "Lichtsperre"(1). We walk only in columns to work, and after six o'clock in the evening, no one is allowed on the street. We come home from work in the dark and in the morning we go to work in the dark. We dress and undress by the touch system. Our windows must be darkened and it is forbidden to have any sort of light. Tomorrow I'm going to the Hamburg barracks for bread and perhaps I'll manage to see Mom.

. . . "Kasernensperre" has been cancelled, but "Lichtsperre" continues, evidently for the whole winter. We have to save on electricity. Each of the different blocks gets it every third day in turn. We may use candles for light, but they don't last long. Supplies from home are being used up and we can't manage to get more. It is terribly stupid, we can't even read in the evening. Without light everything is so sad and gloomy. I am awfully homesick for Prague. Evening after evening Francka and I recall things in Prague far into the night and often we dream of it in our sleep.

. . . Last night I had a beautiful dream. I dreamed that I was at home, I saw quite clearly our flat and street. Now I am disappointed and out of sorts, because I awoke in the bunk instead of my own bed. But maybe this was some sort of omen of an early end. Then there should be permanent "Lichtsperre" all over Germany. . . . This isn't a Home any more, it's a regular hospital. Everyone avoids us, half the children are sick in bed. The thermometers don't go below 40 degrees(2). The

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(1) Confinement to barracks and no lights.

(2) 40° Centrigrade = 104° Fahrenheit.

number of sick goes up every day. The rooms are full of patients and the doctor does not know what to do. I feel rather bad myself. I'd better lie down, after all I have to keep up with them. I've had every illness that has occurred here. "Girls, who's going to Hamburg barracks? Tell mama I shan't come today. I have 40 degrees."

They put Zorka in sick bay yesterday. She's in very bad shape. The doctor doesn't give much hope. It's probably typhoid. They want to put us in quarantine. Everyone is suspicious here. It looks bad. Not a single room has more than three who are well. Dáša, our "Betreuerka"(3) didn't come today, either. She was going around for a week with a fever of 38°. They took Lilka's sister to Vrchlabí barracks yesterday. She is unconscious. They are setting up a new infirmary for us. B-r-r-r, I'm so cold. I surely have a fever . . .

. . . Yesterday I had 40.3°. I had a nosebleed. I felt terrible. They could not stop the bleeding until the doctor came. I thought I'd die, I felt so bad. Today I'm better. If only my fever does not go up . . .

. . . I was lucky. My fever went down exactly on the day when everyone whose fever went over 38 had to go to the sick bay. It's typhoid. I don't know, maybe I had it, maybe not. In any case my fever did not go up and they did not put me in the sick bay.

On the gate of L 410 a big sign is hanging, "Achtung Infektionsgefahr."(4) Everyone runs away. Lilka's sister died, Lilka has typhoid herself. Věra, Olina and Marta went to the infirmary. They transferred Milča to Vrchlabí yesterday, they say she is in the last agony. "What's the matter, Hanka? Why have you been crying so hard? What! Dáša?" "Dáša and Zorka . . . died!"

. . . Typhoid has raged throughout Terezín. The hospitals and infirmaries are crowded. They have cleared out a whole house and made a typhoid ward of it. Everywhere you see the sign "Achtung, Tyfus." At every water faucet and pump, "Don't forget to wash your hands"—but, anyway, the water hardly ever runs.

And a transport again . . . they say it didn't go to Poland, that the front lines are there already and the transport went to some new camp on the Polish border. Somewhere near Bohumín. It probably is the same everywhere.

. . . Old people's transport. Ten thousand sick, crippled, dying, all of them over 65 years old.

It's horrible everywhere. The rays of sun fall exactly on my bunk and reach on farther, I try in vain to get away from them into the shade. Today I shan't go and report for "Hilfsdienst". I haven't left out a day yet, but I am too exhausted to stand the sight of misery and suffering again. The old people's transport, the young

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(3) Room attendant.

(4) Attention, danger of infection.

people cannot volunteer. Children have to let their old parents go off and can't help them. Why do they want to send these defenceless people away? If they want to get rid of us young people, I can understand that, maybe they are afraid of us, don't want us to give birth to any more Jewish children. But how can these old people be dangerous? If they had to come here to Terezín, isn't that enough, can't they let them die in peace here? After all, these old people can't hope for anything else. Half of them will die in the "šlojsky" and in the train.

Under the window the Gestapo are shouting and beating people, closing the street. Another group is going. There they are, carrying stretchers, two-wheeled carts with corpses, baggage and the "corpse cart." The street that had blossomed in the August heat was wrapped in heavy, filthy dust. Baggage, stretchers, corpses. That's the way it's been going on for a week. The dead on two-wheeled carts and the living in hearses. Everything is transported in hearses here: dirty linen, bread—we have one, ourselves, in the Home, standing in the courtyard. It has a sign on it, "Youth Care." What's the difference, one cart is like another, and so far no one seems to wonder at it, but to transport people in them, that's a little too much. Again a cart is rattling under the window. In front there are two transport leaders, then the load, and behind are some "Sick people's bearers," and the "Hilfsdienst." And that among the baggage, is that corpses? No, one is moving, through the cloud of dust whirling around the cart a yellow armband shines through. Who could forget that! We met them daily in the kitchen, on crutches, blind, with a little bowl in hand, begging a little coffee, soup, scraping out the unwashed troughs and kettles that had food, or else raking through piles of rotting potatoes, peelings and garbage. Yes, that's who it is, skinny, hungry, miserable, there they are, alive in hearses. How many of them will arrive at their destination, how many will return? All the hearses are in operation. For the first time they have a load of the living, and yet this is more fitting than anything else. Where will these human wrecks land, where will their bodies be laid down? No one will weep over them, no one pities them. Some day perhaps there will be a mention of them in readers, and then the only title that would do them justice would be: Buried Alive.

. . . The barracks by the physical culture hall must be cleared out, a special dinner is being cooked, and the reception centre is getting ready. They say some Polish children are coming. This is all incomprehensible. Why, and how does it happen that they are brought here from Poland?
They came yesterday at 5 : 00 o'clock. No one is allowed near them. In the night they called some nurses, house representatives and doctors. Besides these no one is allowed near their barracks. We managed to get some news from the barracks. None of the children can speak Czech, we don't even know if they are Jewish children or Polish or what. You can see them a little from the fortress wall, and then they went in the morning to the reception centre. They look awful. You can't guess how old they are, they all have old, strained faces and tiny bodies. They are all barelegged and only a very few have shoes. They returned from the reception centre with their heads shaved, they have lice. They all have such frightened eyes.

. . . Yesterday they were taken off, doctors, nurses and house representatives with them. All during quarantine their food was cooked separately and clothes and shoes were collected for them. The only one who came in contact with them was Fredi Hirsch, who is now sitting in a bunker in the camp command for it.

Where they came from we never found out, nor where they were taken either. Rumours were circulating about deportation to Palestine, but no one believes this. They have gone. All that is left is a few lines scribbled on the wall of the barracks, that hardly anyone can figure out.

. . . The commission, because of which a transport left and the three-layer bunks were torn down, has departed, and I believe they were satisfied. They didn't see through very much, stayed scarcely a half day, but that seems to have been only a rehearsal. The camp command issued new orders about the "beautifying campaign" that must be finished in two months.

It's ridiculous, but it seems that Terezín is to be changed into a sort of spa. I don't know why I was reminded of the fairy tale, "Table, set yourself!" But that is how everything seems to me. The orders are received in the evening, and in the morning everyone's eyes are staring with wonder, where did this or that thing come from? For three years it never occurred to anyone that streets might be named anything but Q and L. Where the Magdeburg barracks or the Jäger or any other barracks was, every little child knew. But all of a sudden the Germans had an idea and over night signs had to be put on every corner house with the name of the street, and at crossroads arrows pointed.: Zum Park, Zum Bad, etc. We don't say Magdeburg barracks any more, but BV; I don't live at L 410, but Hauptstrasse 10. The school by the construction headquarters that had served as hospital up to today, was cleared out over night and the patients put elsewhere while the whole building was repainted, scrubbed up, school benches brought in, and in the morning a sign could be seen afar: "Knaben und Mädchenschule." It really looks fine, like a real school, only the pupils and teachers are missing. That shortcoming is adjusted by a small note on the door: "Holidays". On the square the newly sown grass is coming up, the centre is adorned by a big rose plot and the paths, covered with clean, yellow sand, are lined with two rows of newly painted benches. The boards we wondered about for so many days, trying to puzzle out what they were for, turned into a music pavilion. We even have a café with the fine sign "Kaffeehaus." And all the shops got new names of firms. The houses will also be painted, they have already started in Langestrasse. The barracks behind "Magdeburg," where they had had production and processing of mica have become a "dining hall." The girls that are specially employed there to heat up the food must wear white caps and aprons. The physical culture hall was turned into a restaurant with carved furniture, plush chairs in the foyer, and big vases with bouquets. On the second floor there is a library and reading room and little tables on the terrace with coloured sunflowers. They have already got quite far in painting the houses. Some of the Danish inmates' rooms got equipment. In two of the barracks some bunks and shelves were painted yellow and they got blue curtains. In the park in front of the Infants' Home they put up a luxury pavilion with cribs and light blue, quilted covers. In one room

there are toys, a carved rocking horse, and so on. Then there is a pool, a merry-go-round and see-saws. None of us can explain why they are doing all this. Are they so concerned about that commission? Perhaps we don't even know how good the situation is.

NOTES FROM THE GHETTO—EXCERPTS FROM THE TEREZÍN DIARY OF FOURTEEN-YEAR-OLD CHARLOTTE VEREŠOVÁ OF PRAGUE

It is three weeks now since I came to this extraordinary place, actually a ghetto. I read once about the former ghettos and it never entered my head that I would experience such a thing one day. It seems to me as if we had gone back a few hundred years.

Everything here is so strange—different from anywhere else in the world. For instance, people walk in the street, not just on the pavement, but there are so many of us here that we would probably not fit on the sidewalk. Cars do not drive here, though, so nothing can run over us. We sleep in bunks and everywhere lots of people are packed in. Husbands and wives do not live together and their children live separate from them in homes, or whatever you call it. When you hear the word "home" you imagine something quite nice. Well, it's all quite different, because that is how it must be. Nevertheless I envy the others a little, because they can at least visit their parents. I am here completely alone. Without Mommy and Dad and without my big brother whom I miss so much.

I was fourteen years old not long ago and I had never been away from home before, not even over the holidays, because I have no grandmother or aunt whom I could have gone to visit. So this is my first trip away from my parents and it's so strange. I should be glad that my folks are not here, and actually it's better that way. They will send me parcels and that's fine and dandy, and soon the war will be over and I'll go home. Every one said that I'm going for only a couple of months and perhaps I can hold out that long.

My father is Jewish and my mommy is Aryan, so my brother and I are mixed and children of mixed marriages must, according to some German laws, go to Terezín. Why, I don't know, nor why it has to be us and not Dad, it's all a big mix-up. They say Mom saves Dad from being sent in a transport, but not us. It isn't clear to me, but nothing can be done about it, it's the stupid regulations.

So I sit here in my bunk and write and am unhappy.

. . . I still have no appetite. Most of the time I eat from my own supplies, but they are slowly disappearing. What will happen then? The food here stinks. I wonder that anyone can eat it. Gita says that in no time I'll be eating it, too. Perhaps I'll get a parcel soon.

This is the menu for the children's kitchen. Up to sixteen years we get a little better food than the rest.

	Lunches	*Suppers*
Monday	Soup, millet	small loaf of bread
Tuesday	Soup, potatoes, turnips	soup
Wednesday	Soup, potatoes, goulash	small loaf of bread
Thursday	Soup, dumplings, gravy	sausage, soup
Friday	Soup, barley	bun
Saturday	Soup, potatoes, turnips	soup
Sunday	Soup, bun with cream sauce	20 grams of margarine, teaspoonful of jam

The menu doesn't look so bad, but it is impossibly cooked and the soups are the same every day. They look like water from washing the floors. B-r-r-r, I never in my life ate soup, and I shan't eat these at all. We have black coffee for breakfast and nothing with it (it's slop).

. . . Tonička and I have made friends. We understand each other very well and we have said that we will have a "commune", meaning that we will keep everything together. Bread, sugar, margarine and parcels from home, even when one gets more than the others. It comes out better that way. We manage to get only one kilogram of bread every three days. They bring it in old hearses pulled by people. Actually, that is the only transportation here. They also carry corpses in them. Sometimes we get mouldy bread and that's bad. We cut off the mouldy part and then we must slice the rest in very thin slices to make it stretch, and it doesn't matter at all that we have to eat dry bread. If only we get enough. Sometimes I'd cut off another slice, but I mustn't. Tonička is a good housewife. I'd just gobble it all down and then the third day I wouldn't have any. Now I've begun to think too much about food. I even eat the disgusting soups sometimes, and only a little while ago I couldn't have imagined it.

. . . I've learned here to appreciate ordinary things that, if we had them when we were still free, we didn't notice at all. Like riding in a bus or a train, or walking freely along the road, to the water, say. Or to go buy ice cream. Such an ordinary thing and it is out of our reach.

Sometimes when I stand on the bastions and below me there is mud and swamp—jumping down would probably mean death. Sometimes it strikes me—would I jump if that would bring the end of the war? I should like to give my life so that it would. I should like to perform some great deed, so that my name would not die out, but I'll not be able to do anything. I know it is stupid, and so I don't tell even Tonička anything about it.

. . . When we go to work we pass normal cottages, where people live a normal life.

When will it be granted us to be such people who need not live by regulation? I look through their windows and in the morning their beds are not made up yet. I have a wild desire to climb in and sleep and sleep . . .

. . . Transports are leaving for Poland. Three with 2,500 people in each. Eight girls are going from our room. It's sad. Children of mixed marriages are so far safe from transports; that means that it's probably worse in Poland than it is here. So many old people are going, and orphans must, too. We are arranging "Hilfsdienst," all of us, now. That means helping to pack wherever we are most needed. Mainly old people. The poor things, why don't they leave them in peace? After all, they are about to die and could just as well die here. Yesterday I helped a family with seven children and today one with three children whose mother has tuberculosis.

This is supposed to be a model ghetto, so why do they send people away, especially old people, because it probably wouldn't look nice if some one saw them begging for that disgusting soup? The town is packed, and that also does not make a good impression, either.

The Germans are going to make a film here, so they are up to all sorts of monkey-shines. Sometimes we think it's a joke and it really is funny. To whom will they show us off? Are we something they can brag about? They should be ashamed but probably they don't know how to be. The sidewalks are being scrubbed and wherever there is even a tiny bit of earth they plant flowers. They carried earth to the main square and have made a park, but no one is allowed to go into it. They play music there at noon, too. It sounds nice, but it does not satisfy us and even with the music I am still very homesick. If not more so.

. . . It is rumoured that they are building gas chambers here. People whisper about it and they really are building something mysterious in the fortification catacombs with airtight doors. They say a duck farm. What for? Might it still be gas? I can't believe it. It is too terrible. Never before have I truly admitted the idea of death, and now gas all of a sudden. It's terrible, even if the longed-for end of the war is coming closer. Oh, how stupid I was when I was unhappy over silly little things! For example, that I was unlucky in love, or that I didn't want to get up in the morning. Everything is so petty compared to this thing. Here it is a question of life and we have only one single life. No, it mustn't happen, they can't do it, no one will let them! But why shouldn't they do it? Who prevented them from bringing us here and who will prevent the gas chambers, who—God? I have stopped believing in God, so is this punishment for that? No, it isn't, Tonička and Bertička pray and they would be sent to the gas chambers with me. But I won't give up. I am not a bug, even though I am just as helpless. If something starts, I'll run away. At least I'll try, after all, what could I lose? It would be better to be shot while trying to escape than to be smothered with gas. I'll take Tonička and we'll run away to Litoměřice together. Perhaps someone will take us in there. I know I'm not the only one, but still I'll not give up just like that, without resisting! No, I shan't give up, even if everyone else did, but not I! I want to live, I want to go back home, for after all I've done nothing to anyone, so why should I die?

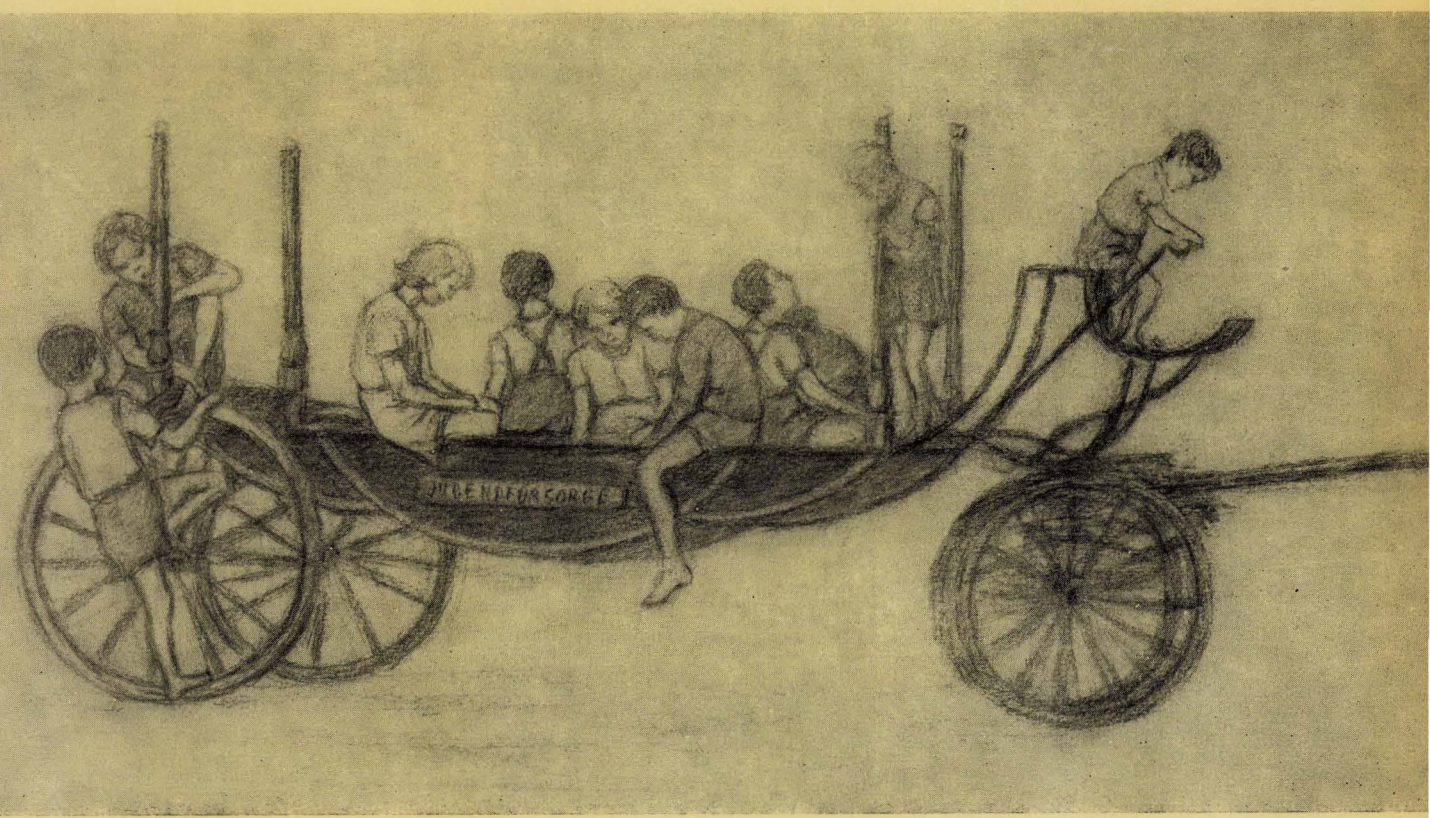
It's so unjust!

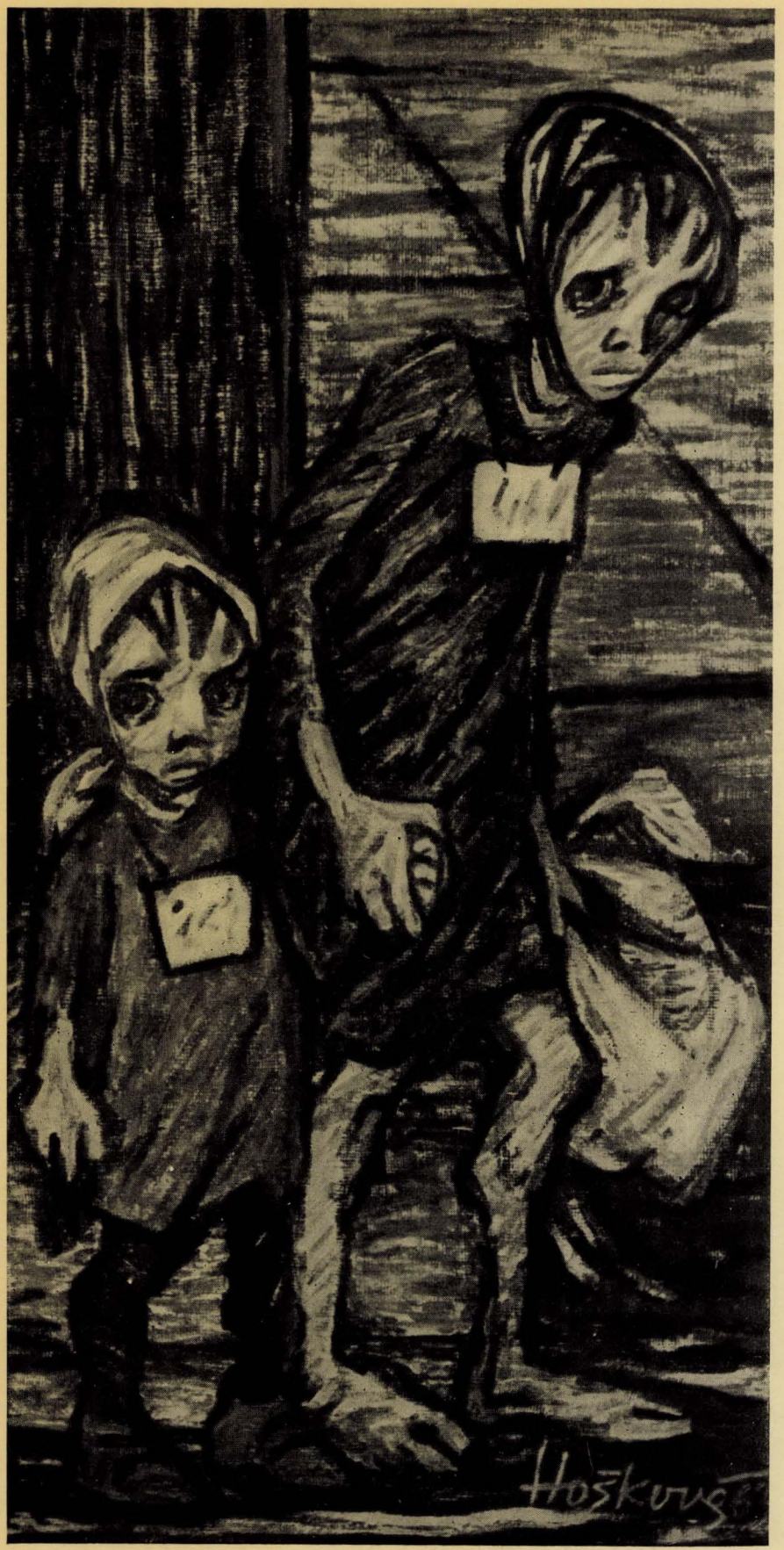
It's interesting that we girls never talk about the gas with each other. It's as if it weren't true if we don't mention it.

Yesterday the girls went to do such unusual work. They had to take urns to the Ohře River and throw them in. For this they each got half a meat paste. And something else strange is going on. On the bastions the Germans are burning their archives. Sometimes a bit of paper flies into our garden and we read it. We are not allowed to pick it up, it's true, and a German soldier is guarding us with a gun, but we are curious, of course. But anyway we can't read much of it. Usually there is just a name and date of birth. They are Jewish names. Obviously the Germans are getting afraid and are trying to smooth over their traces. Why else would they be doing it? It is a good sign . . .



31 Hearse—the universal means of transportation (Malvina Schalková)

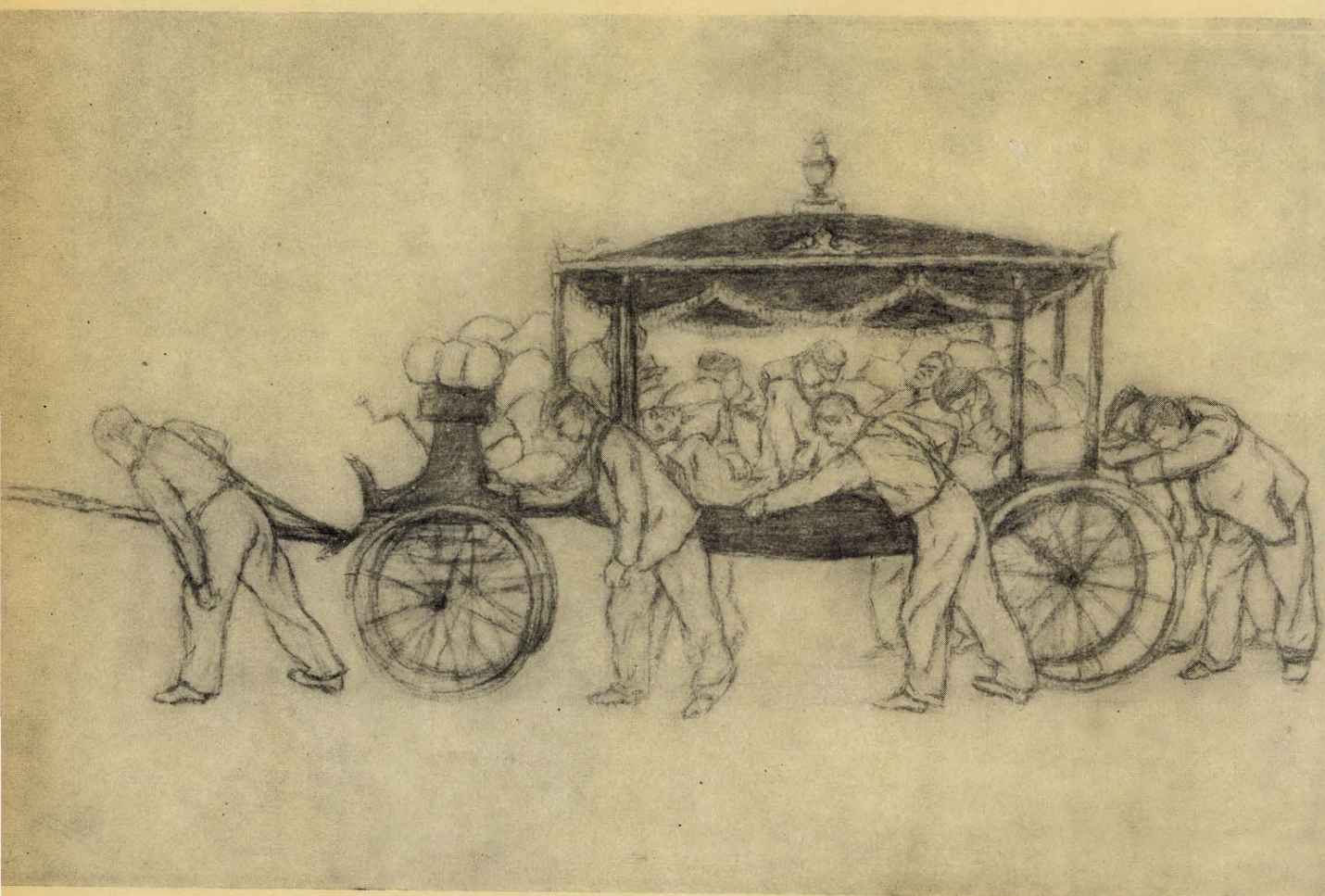




Going to the transport
(Helga Weissová-Hošková)



34 Bread is delivered (Malvina Schalková)





5 Courtyard in the Ghetto (Leo Haas)

36



38

38—40 Products made by Terezín inmates

36—37 Scenes of life in the Ghetto (Leo Haas)





41 The "Café" in Terezín (Leo Haas)



CHAPTER IV

TEREZÍN SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF A DOCTOR

HEALTH CONDITIONS
IN TEREZÍN / Dr. Erich Springer, M. D.

SOME COMMENTS ON THE PSYCHOLOGY
OF LIFE IN THE GHETTO
TEREZÍN / Dr. Jiří Diamant

All the day my enemies taunt me,
those who deride me use my name for a curse. Psalm 102 : 8 (9)

Dr. ERICH SPRINGER, M. D.

HEALTH CONDITIONS IN TEREZÍN



IT SEEMS paradoxical to speak of health conditions in connection with a concentration camp set up by the Nazis. But the intentions of the Gestapo to undermine the health of the inhabitants in Terezín as fast as they possibly could were thwarted, or at least made difficult, by the self-sacrificing efforts and labours of the doctors, nurses, and their helpers, who were all interned themselves. This feat combined exemplary moral principles, strength, and cooperation, and deserves grateful recognition.

Terezín, a fortress dating from the 18th century, had a capacity of about 9,000 persons, and of these 6,000 were soldiers lodged in barracks, the remainder mostly civilians in ordinary dwellings. There was absolutely no place for a larger number, no additional sanitary facilities were available, over-crowding could endanger the residents, and the introduction of an infectious disease could lead to an epidemic. Some officials of the Jewish Religious Community in Prague were called together for the strictly confidential preliminary work of setting up a ghetto in Terezín, in the autumn of 1941. They were not told by the "Zentralstelle für Jüdische Auswanderung in Prag" that the real purpose was to establish a transit camp. A resettlement of Jews from Bohemia and Moravia to a ghetto was mentioned, and unconditional obedience was demanded in building it.

The original time set for the evacuation of Jews was suddenly changed because of unforeseen military events in the autumn of 1941, and transports were sent to Terezín that had been intended for the "East," meaning Minsk, Riga, etc. So it happened that by the end of December 1941, 7,400 men, women, and children had arrived at the ghetto before sufficient measures could be taken to receive them.

A labour command of 342 men came to Terezín on November 24, 1941, to do the building and prepare for a later "settlement" of the ghetto. Dr. Erich Klapp of Prague, a specialist in internal diseases, was assigned to this group as doctor. It was a dubious task to have charge of medical matters with empty hands and no other resources. Perhaps it was theoretically possible, but not in practice. Before a doctor's office or an infirmary could be set up, other unanticipated transports arrived. Doctors came, but no medicaments; sick people, but no possibility of receiving them properly. Moreover, there were no medical instruments, for it had seemed superfluous to take them along.

The secret of what Terezín was to become was so well kept that not only was there no suspicion of a ghetto, but the people in the transports even thought they were going to a labour camp where they would be given leave after a while, and where they could carry on correspondence with their relatives. Furthermore, they expected that, for instance, when surgery was necessary, patients could be sent to a hospital. When Dr. Klapp found that a patient had acute appendicitis and requested that the camp head send him to a hospital, the answer was brusque, that in the future he should refrain from such demands, or he would be severely punished. Without instruments, without surgically trained doctors, the patient could not be operated on, and died in six days. This was the first fatal victim in Terezín, to be followed by many thousand others.

The hurried dispatching of transports to Terezín brought unimaginable chaos, and this is probably the reason that on December 4, 1941, another 1,000 able-bodied men were sent from Prague in a work transport to the ghetto. There were sixteen

doctors in this transport, among them Dr. Erich Munk, who had already been chosen in Prague to organize and supervise health conditions. Experts and manual labourers were in this transport, too, all of them in the dark about what awaited them. I was also in it and, immediately upon arrival, was called, together with Klapp to Munk, who requested a report on the situation from Klapp. On this occasion, Munk informed me that I should act as surgeon in the ghetto. Plans that had been drawn up in Prague proved worthless, for the realities that faced us were quite different from what had been assumed. Nothing was available but people, no straw pallets, no furniture, not enough sanitary facilities, no heating. We froze, many were hungry, others fell ill, many were desperate or disoriented, and others were apathetic.

Proposals were made for medical equipment to cover the situation; drawn up in rough outline, the plans were to be carried out as soon as possible. This occurred during the night, December 4 to December 5—we allowed ourselves no rest. The next day there were new difficulties to overcome, dividing the inmates by sex and settling the women and children in other barracks, while the men stayed where they were. I was charged with the medical supervision of the women's barracks and was supposed to set up a sick bay there, with the possibility of performing urgent operations as well. How this was to be done, was left up to us. A completely empty barracks with bare walls looked like ruins. Where were we to get beds, where could we set up an operating room, how could we make bandages and operating material sterile? Where could we get the operation linen and what should we use to perform the operations? All these problems were awaiting an answer and an awareness of responsibility forced us to seek and find a positive solution.

We found old army beds and even a bath stove in a garret, left behind as useless rubbish when the barracks were cleared out. We installed the stove in a room that had been used for baths and that now was intended as "operating room"; here it could be used to heat the water. The beds were repaired, fitted with straw pallets and put in three rooms. We collected bed linen from the inhabitants, especially linen cloths that we needed for the sick rooms and operations. Everyone gave what he could. Without urging we collected hundreds of items, from the coarsest material to fine batiste, both threadbare and new.

A few days after the barracks were settled, the sick bay was fully occupied. Those who were not gravely ill were treated in the out-patients department, bed patients were put in the sick bay. They lay on straw, ten, twenty, up to several hundred in one room, some women even dressed in fine lingerie. The doctor was always surrounded by the curious, for at first the doctor's visit was an event, and under these conditions it was an unusual experience for the doctor, too. From uncommon it became common, for after weeks and months there were more and more ill people and bed patients, and a doctor's visit was given only a fleeting glance by the people around. In the men's barracks only one sick bay was set up, with no thought of performing operations there. The first patient who had to be operated on was a man who had gangrene in his lower leg, which made amputation necessary.

The first difficulty was that we had to transfer the man to the women's barracks, which could be done only with the special permission of the camp command. The second was that we could not sterilize the operation linen, for there was no apparatus

available for steam sterilizing. We had already tried to have the operation equipment sterilized in a military or civilian hospital. This request was rejected and here again we had to improvise. Under these conditions, any major surgical step was a risk, as in the time before Semmelweis or Lister, with the difference that we knew the cause of poor healing of wounds, infection of the wound because there was insufficient asepsis. For an amputation the surgeon also required a saw, which was unavailable in our modest instrument case. We had to use a carpenter's saw and then were able to perform the operation. Before the "hospital" was opened we operated only in the most urgent cases, in order to avoid unnecessary danger.

In December 1941, a woman contracted scarlet fever, and with the overcrowding it was only too obvious that this did not remain an isolated case and other persons fell ill. This scarlet fever epidemic could not be completely wiped out in the ghetto. The course was light in many cases, and then again this infectious disease had severe complications, brain abscesses, pleurisy, and bone ulcers. The first steps in fighting the infection was to isolate the patients and to quarantine those suspected of having the disease. Both measures were difficult to carry out and dubious in effect. True, a provisional infectious disease ward was set up in the ghetto guardhouse, but whoever wished could obtain entrance. The first nurse in this ward was Mrs. Wolfenstein, whose daughter had fallen ill with scarlet fever. She later became one of our most reliable nurses, but like many others fell victim to her work, dying of typhus shortly before liberation.

The number of scarlet fever cases constantly increased, so we were given the task of preparing the former infectious disease department of the abandoned military hospital for receiving patients. After brief preliminary work, the patients, children and adults alike, were transferred on a foggy night—no figure of speech—and the temperature was 28° below zero Centigrade. The ghetto police watched proceedings. The doctors also served as stretcher-bearers. The streets were closed off, for the civilian population that still occupied a large part of Terezín were not supposed to know about the scarlet fever epidemic.

All this took place in December 1941. Besides their routine work, the doctors spent every spare moment in building up the health facilities. Wherever shortcomings appeared, ways were sought to eliminate them. Hygienic and epidemiologic measures were taken, necessary appliances and medicaments were obtained, and economy introduced in the use of bandages, and many other things. Nothing could be overlooked, for our requests went through SS channels to the district doctor in Litoměřice, Dr. Krönert, who either approved or rejected them. It should be said at this point that Dr. Krönert did a great deal for the ghetto and helped to obtain medicaments. Despite the risk, many a report was sent from Terezín by secret, underground routes, although smuggling out letters could, and did, bring a death sentence. In this way, news gradually got out about the ghetto, with the result for the health system, at least, that the newcomers brought medicaments with them that were then put at general disposal.

The health system was organized in such a way that the chief had one assistant for problems of hygiene, and another for medical care of the residents. The large blocks, with many thousand occupants, were headed by a chief doctor for the blocks who gave orders to each block doctor. Subordinate to the supervisor of the health

system were the head doctor of the hospital and those of the auxiliary hospitals, the sanitary squad for removing bodies and, finally, the central pharmacy.

And now a few words about the medicine and the ways of delivering it. From 1942 on, all packages in the transports were taken from the owners and emptied in the camp storerooms, where the good items of clothing and linen were requisitioned by those on duty and the remainder left to the inmates. Since in every piece of luggage that 139,606 people took with them to Terezín there were medicaments that were all left to the ghetto inhabitants, a mountain of medicaments from many countries of Europe piled up. This had to be inspected and then handed over to the Central Pharmacy. These medicaments were our main source for powders and tablets against pain, or for heart diseases, skin diseases, etc. Besides the Central Pharmacy, distribution centres were set up in the different blocks, in the hospital and in the barracks.

Setting up a hospital was very difficult, because in the first place there were no beds, no furniture, no examination tables or operation tables. We had no steam-sterilization apparatus, in short, we had nothing. The solution was the help given us by the old people's homes and Jewish hospitals in Germany and later in Bohemia also. As early as the spring of 1942 a part of the equipment from these institutions that had been dissolved was sent to Terezín, if it was damaged and of little value. Once they even came by barge along the Elbe. In general there was a lot of rubbish, but actually these things were of inestimable value for us. In this way we obtained beds, even bedside tables, other tables and a sterilizer for pressure sterilization. Whatever could be repaired was put in shape by our own efforts, so that in April 1942 we could proceed to the opening of the internal and the surgical wards. Later, other departments were set up, until the hospital had over 1,000 beds—squeezed together in a narrow space, it is true, but still usable. The specialists who were present served as department heads, and later world-renowned doctors could be called in for consultation, specialists who had been transported to Terezín. I shall name but a few: the pathologist Professor Pick, internal specialist Professor Herrmann Strauss, the surgeon Professor Werner, the hematologist Professor Hirschfeld, and many others who gave us counsel. They made only a temporary recovery from the hardships they had gone through, so they could not be fully employed. Sad to say, all the above-named eminent doctors died in Terezín. Not one was permitted to live and die in peace and quiet in their homeland, although they had done so much for mankind. Herrmann Strauss organized a scientific body to attempt a study of the diseases that appeared in Terezín and to recommend therapeutic measures. The doctors who had newly arrived were especially informed about the situation and acquainted with the possibilities of treatment.

The health organization was centrally directed, and all reports and data about the immediate situation were concentrated in one place. Every newly arrived doctor had to report to Dr. Munk, who decided where he should be employed. The doctors were urged to perform their work in a scientific way and to stand ready for service at all times. The distribution of nurses and helpers to the wards and stations was also made centrally. This was a large order, when one considers that more and more women who were indispensable as nurses were included in transports.

The ghetto was seldom at rest throughout the whole period of its existence. Sometimes the commotion and difficulties were greater, sometimes less. The number of inhabitants grew from month to month. The peak level totalled about 54,000 in September 1942, the lowest point around 11,000 persons in October 1944. The density of population was about 50 times as great as Berlin's before the war, with as many as 327,000 per square kilometre (2.25 square miles). This terrible overcrowding in the autumn and winter 1942-1943 was devastating for the population of the ghetto. In 1942, 51,000 Jews came from Bohemia and Moravia, and 46,500 from Germany and Austria, and in the same year another 46,500 were despatched to Terezín. In 1942 15,800 died in the ghetto. I give these figures only to make the situation a little more understandable. Thousands and thousands, sick and feeble, came and there was no place for them. They were lodged at least by giving them a roof over their heads, many a time in a garret, so that they were directly under the roof. In summer this meant unbearable heat, in winter equally unbearable cold. There were epidemics of typhoid fever, infestation with clothing lice, not to speak of other, less dangerous vermin.

The coming and going, the coming of older persons and the transports of the young gave us no opportunity to plan for any long-range period. The aged and sick, part of them sent directly from old people's homes to Terezín, who had been confined to their room or to their bed for years, could not survive the hardships of the trip or the conditions of life in the camp, either. The number of deaths totalled 20,582 from August 1942 to the end of March 1943, or an average of 2,572 a month, over 85 a day with the peak in September almost 4,000 or about 130 a day. It was impossible to maintain the necessary bodily hygiene; lice constantly got the upper hand, so that radical measures had to be taken. Unfortunately these necessary measures also cost thousands of lives. In a de-lousing station that not only had insufficient capacity, but also little heating, those who were infested by lice were bathed and given clean clothing and linen. Many did not survive this "treatment" and did not leave the station alive. The dead were brought to the central morgue and from there to the crematorium. The crematorium had eight cremation ovens, which seemed incomprehensible to those who had worked out the plans. Why was a crematorium with such capacity needed? Today we can see from this construction how exactly, to the smallest detail, the annihilation of the Jews was planned, what a terribly high death rate was planned for the ghetto when it was built and how far these and other plans were carried out.

Despite all this, the fight against death was not relinquished, but went forward. Besides the main hospital, there were established auxiliary hospitals, a children's hospital, an infirmary for incurables and an old folks' "home." True, the room available for this was a minimum, but still every ill person, everyone needing aid, received medical care from the aides. There were few professional nurses in Terezín and these were mainly employed in the main hospital, but hundreds of untrained women performed this difficult service in a self-sacrificing way. They deserve our admiration and appreciation, as do also the stretcher-bearers, the disinfection workers and all others who helped to alleviate the misery. They all did as much as they could, and many did more than they could, all were weakened by insufficient nourishment, but when they were needed they were always on hand.

A special group were the stretcher-bearers who carried the sick from the house to the doctor's office, to the hospital, and home again. Everyone who was unable to walk was taken by means of the stretcher-bearers wherever he needed to go. Although there were no great distances in Terezín, they must have done many kilometres with their patients daily. Only stretchers were available, but the transport went ahead without friction. All the men in this group were included in transports away from Terezín and only a very few returned to their homeland.

A great deal has been said already about the transports—transports that came and those that left the ghetto. In December 1941 no one anticipated that transports would be going from Terezín also. Nevertheless, at the beginning of January, the task was set to put together a transport of 1,000 persons, that was to depart on January 9. This news came like a bolt from the blue, if one can speak of blue skies over Terezín. The question arose for us, how much consideration would be given the sick, whether it would be possible to hold back doctors and nursing personnel, when they were so urgently needed at their place of work. The answer was roughly that the old and sick were not to be included in the transport. Age could be determined easily by the birthdate, the "sick" were much harder to define, for here not only objective, but also subjective criteria played a role. We did not know, either, where the transports were going, how long the trip would last, what the living conditions would be at the point of destination. Therefore the concept "capable of transport" was created. Based on the law of humanitarianism, on the ethical and moral principles of the medical profession, patients with acute infectious diseases, tuberculosis, or cancer in the stage of severest metastasis, the heavily disabled, blind, and also small infants, were declared incapable of transport. It is only too clear that the judging of individual cases was made according to personal views.

Because more and more old people remained in Terezín and the number of ill persons grew, while there were fewer able-bodied, the ghetto became a concentration camp for the ill and feeble and their attendants, except for the groups that worked for military industries.

The conditions for treating the sick were constantly changing, but in rough outline they corresponded in the hospitals to civilian conditions. This was despite the fact that such an important means of cure as diet for the patients had to be completely ignored. Moreover, patients that should have been confined to bed, according to the valid regulations, were treated as out-patients. But all the efforts and the success achieved were only temporary, for everything was suddenly demolished by the orders issued by the camp command. Many of the orders were examples of extreme cruelty and violated every rule of humanity. Thus, all the mentally ill had to be put in a transport. At that time there were about 240. They had been sent from mental institutions, where they were no longer endured as Jews. In the ghetto they were very badly handled, cut off from the world around them, in approximately the way we have learned from contemporary descriptions that the insane were treated in the 18th century. The care of these people was also much more difficult, for they understood absolutely nothing that was happening to them, and there were outbreaks of rage and terrible scenes. But they actually were all sent away in transports and their fate is clear to everyone today.

In autumn 1944, at the time of the large transports, all those incapable of transport were excluded by the valid regulations and customs. There were over 1,800 persons in this category. Since it became more and more difficult to put transports together, the order came to put all those who had been excluded from transports into three transports and to send them out of Terezín. Only in exceptional cases did we succeed in retracting the placing of these people in the transports, but we did particularly when it had to be recognized that they could not be brought alive to the train. Among others was a patient who had been operated on the day before for stomach ulcer and, besides that, was tubercular. It had to be assumed that he could not survive the hardships of the journey. The patient lived through Terezín to the end.

Another brutal regulation was the prohibition against bringing into the world children who had been conceived in Terezín. If the women were already pregnant when they arrived at the ghetto the delivery was permitted. There were only a very few infants in the ghetto and an extremely small number of births. The pregnancy had to be interrupted in any case, no matter in which month it was discovered. In a few isolated cases it was possible to get permission from the camp head to carry the child to the end. I know of only one case where a girl was conceived in the ghetto, was born there and still lives today. All the others were sent in transports to the gas chambers in Auschwitz. This girl was an exception because after her birth there were no more transports.

The interest of the SS and the SD Dienstellen up to the supreme authorities of the Reichsicherheitshauptamt for the establishment of health systems was of significance. We were visited and checked on by Müller, Eichmann, F. H. Frank, the Günther brothers and many others who have been either sentenced as war criminals or, if they have not yet been found, should not be allowed to escape punishment. The camp commanders also came to the hospital, watched while operations were performed, often accompanied by a police dog, and always in uniform.

As a consequence of the bad hygienic conditions, the unusual work and the filth, there were quite frequent cases of inflammatory disease, especially of the upper, but also the lower extremities. This fact was also known to the camp command. Some influential doctor with SS Sicherheitsdienst connections wanted to have his discovery tested for treatment of inflammatory processes with medicaments in gas or liquid form. We were therefore given the task of testing this "medical gas" on a number of abscesses and phlegmons. For this purpose a special ward was set up in the summer of 1944 for the treatment of these patients. In this ward the patients were photographed—a Leica camera was made available for this, only when an SS-man was present—and drawings were made as documentation for the report on the results of treatment. I have in my possession a complete copy, with the photographs and drawings that were made, without the camp heads knowing of their existence. This is one of the few documents from the time of the autumn 1944 transports. Everything else had to be destroyed, although the health system was supposed to make model case histories and also prepare much other written material. The medical gas treatment made it possible for us to order medicaments that had been unavailable for a long time, such as quinine or perubalsam. Both were components of the medical gas and could be used also in other ways. We succeeded in

giving better accommodations to some of the most seriously ill and thus save them from certain death. Nevertheless, like other patients, many of them were included in transports after their treatment had ended, although they had been "protected" during the treatment, i.e., they were not allowed to be put on transport lists.

As we have already mentioned, the density of the ghetto population caused epidemics when any infectious disease broke out. Besides scarlet fever we had typhoid, encephalitis, infectious jaundice, and in the last days of the ghetto, typhus. This epidemic was all the more disastrous because on April 20, 1945, and later, transports came to Terezín with human wrecks, all infested with lice, ill with dysentery or typhus, having spent days and weeks on the way. Inhabitants of the "Small Fortress of Terezín" also came to our ghetto. This was a concentration camp that the Prague Gestapo had charge of, and here typhus had also broken out. The accommodations for the newcomers were catastrophic. An attempt was made to isolate them, but the rooms were insufficiently equipped, without latrines or possibility of treatment. Again there were mass deaths, tragic because many of them died after the May 9th liberation. Furthermore 44 doctors and nurses died, after having treated or nursed these patients, following their ideals of duty. They died at a time when the fear of war, of concentration camp and of race hatred had already passed.

Again and again there were special feats. It is also worthy of mention that, with such miserable conditions as prevailed in Terezín, blood transfusions could be given and that especially the doctors and nurses, although they themselves were poorly nourished, gave blood. An example of many such cases was when sepsis set in after the perforation of a young woman's inflamed appendix, with the suppuration of the abdominal wall that followed a large number of operations. Repeated blood transfusions were able to save the patient and, although she was included in a transport after a year of sick bay, she survived all her tribulations and still lives today in Ireland.

In many countries of all the continents there are former inhabitants of the Terezín ghetto, others have died, part as a result of the hardships, part from old age. But it should never be forgotten that in Terezín itself 34,261 people died. Even in the most terrible time of epidemic and mass death, the health workers never gave in to a feeling of hopelessness, but again and again tried to do the best for their patients under the given conditions. Many of those who have survived came close to death during their illness in the ghetto and escaped, thanks to the self-sacrificing care given them by the health organization. We attempted to heal the sick in a concentration camp, and to preserve the health of those who were well. Although these efforts were often brought to naught by the brutal intervention of the Gestapo, the achievements of the health workers in Terezín should hold an honoured place in the history of medicine. Thanks are due to all of them, and of course this includes those who are no longer among the living.

A Suitcase Speaks

BY ILSE WEBER

I am a little suitcase from Frankfurt on Main
and I look for my owner, where might he be?
He wore a star, and he was old and blind
and held on to me as if I were a child.
His travelling companion he often has called me.
I can still feel his careful and caressing hand.
I am of genuine vulcanit fibre, you can see,
and have always been so neat and clean.
Year-in and year-out I followed my man,
and this time, too - now he is alone.
He was old and blind, what's become of him now?
And why was I taken off him and put in a row?
And why was I left abandoned and lost?
His name is still written on my covering cloth.
Now I am dirty, the lock does not work.
I was emptied and plundered, nothing was left
except a piece of material and a cup
and his little leaden plate to show he was blind.
All else was taken away, his pills and his bread.
He probably misses me, perhaps he's in need.
It must be hard for him, who is blind,
to find me among this pile of every kind.
In any case, I can't understand why
we must perish here useless, why we must die.
I am a small suitcase from a far-away town,
I want to be back with my owner, he is all alone.

DR. JIŘÍ DIAMANT

SOME COMMENTS ON THE PSYCHOLOGY OF LIFE IN THE GHETTO TEREZÍN



MY EARLY youth was about the same as that of most of my contemporaries. I was the first-born son of well-to-do parents. We lived in Brno, where I grew up in an environment of attentive care and love. I was four years old before I had a brother and we had scarcely begun to play together when I had to start attending school. I studied with zest, enjoyed the search for knowledge and tried to learn as much as possible.

At that time, however, my fate began to develop differently from that of many other children. The danger from neighbouring Germany began to spread inexorably over Europe: Austria, the Sudeten area, the Protectorate. I was not yet nine years old when I first saw from the window of our flat a low-flying plane with a black swastika on the wings. I shall never forget this sight, nor the entrance of German tanks into nearby streets . . .

We soon had to move from our flat—the landlord was a German. My father lost his place and had to begin manual labour at the age of 45, where they were building the station at Maloměřice. The same year we heard that my uncle in Uherský Brod had been arrested because, after the eight o'clock curfew, he had left half the bench, on which he was sitting, sticking out the gate. In 1941 I was in the fifth class of the Jewish elementary school and wanted to go on to Jewish secondary school, but it was no longer possible.

The first transports for Terezín were beginning to move out of Prague. We waited our turn and hoped that perhaps something would happen by that time to prevent it. They began to move families in together—two families were moved into our flat, making eleven people in a three-room flat. We had to wear badges on the street, to show everyone we were Jews. Once some Hitler Jugend attacked us by the Regional Theatre in Brno. We were young and inexperienced, so we defended ourselves and won. We were threatened with the Gestapo and arrest. This did not mean much to us and we were not afraid. So far we did not know what was concealed behind these terms.

The transports began to leave from Brno, too. Before I was twelve years old we received a notice for Transport Ad, in March 1942. I had the number Ad 555 and reflected for a long while on the significance of this combination of numbers.

Then the packing began on a large scale. Friends came to take leave of us, many of them taking some of our things away with them. They were bewildered and fearful. It was a harsh winter. In the last few days before we left, as we were playing in the courtyard, neighbour boys drew the Star of David in the snow in front of us and sneered and said things they themselves did not understand.

The day we left home is engraved in my memory. When we were saying goodbye my father assured the neighbours that we would return in a few months and even then I realized what an optimist Dad was.

We lived a few days in a school that had been cleared out; we lay on the floor on straw pallets that were placed close together, side by side—men, women, boys, girls. We awaited the end of this brief temporary arrangement and at the same time we feared that what would follow would be worse. On March 23 we left the building in a file, five deep. They counted us carefully (as they did so many times afterwards), so that not one would be missing, alive or dead. We went to the tram that I had been so glad to ride when I was a free person. And the train was waiting for us at the station.

It was a long walk from the Bohušovice station to Terezín. And then we stood before our goal. We boys lived with Mother in the Hamburg barracks, and Dad lived in the Vrchlabské. Then I was put in the Children's Home L 417, at first in room No. 7, and later I went through the critical period of puberty in No. 9. This was a bright time in the grey obscurity of my

preceding and succeeding memories. We were living in an environment that was unusually mature in an intellectual sense. The burdens of life and the constant unpleasant happenings around us hastened the spiritual maturing of all of us and we became grown men too soon, with the body, attire and general appearance of a child. But we had a varied experience for our age, mature views and attitudes. The lack of entertainment in our life gave us a higher passion for learning: we listened eagerly to the lectures by Dr. Zwicker on the history of the Greeks and Romans, we gathered in the attic and followed the account given by Mr. Kohn (a bank official), who initiated us into the mysteries of algebra and analytical geometry in a fascinating way, and we were carried away by Professor Eisinger's talks on Czech literature. Poets and writers were discovered among us. We competed with one another, wrote a chronicle, published a magazine. In this environment I had the opportunity of listening to music, to the Czech music of Bedřich Smetana. We practised The Bartered Bride there. I buried myself in its tones, listened again and again to the joyful melodies, full of optimism that was so needed by us all. With equal attention I later followed The Kiss, Brundibár and the Marriage of Figaro.

We had a friendly relationship with the girl's home. The girls came to attend discussion groups at our home, and the first acquaintanceships, the first friendships came into being.

The relatively regular life in the children's home was disturbed from time to time by events outside the ghetto or within it: the Heydrichiad, transports. In January 1943, relatives from Moravia came to Terezín. We visited with them briefly and after a few days they went into the unknown and we never saw them again. In September, the first transports left for Birkenau. We were not selected, but a number of relatives and friends went.

My parents, my brother and I often visited each other; the mutual contact strengthened us and eased our suffering. One day bad news came. A check up caught one of the woman cooks in the kitchen for infants as she was taking some doughnuts away. She got frightened and named other cooks, among them my mother who had been drudging to make things better for us. The punishment came: she lost her job and we were put on the list for the next transport. In three months it happened—in December 1943 we went to Birkenau.

I spent a little under 21 months in Terezín. My youth prevented me from understanding fully everything that happened around me. But, at the same time, I felt all the more keenly all the changes in my environment and much has been permanently blazed in my memory. I observed the people around me, I observed myself. I saw that the behaviour of many people had changed: some grew older, others became more selfish, ruthless, others more melancholy and reflective. Even at that time I began to wonder what were the reasons for the changes in the behaviour, what are the mechanisms that determine the behaviour of a man in a changed life situation.

My eighty-year-old grandmother came to Terezín, bringing memories of my happy childhood. But my mother did not let me see her, wishing my memories of her to remain pleasant.

Fate did not spare us. In July 1944 my parents and the ten-year-old Thomas perished in Birkenau. My memories of them remained alive and ever-lasting.

I was fourteen years old when I was orphaned. I remained alone in the concentration camp, a passive object of the attacks of German racism. My turn did not come, and I returned to the few remaining relatives to whom my father had sent me when we parted.

The desire to learn, a love of music and of people, faith in man and in good, remained with me. I studied languages, philosophy and then psychology. I tried to penetrate to the spiritual life of man, to discover, observe, explain, examine. I devoted myself to clinical psychology, specializing in mental disturbances, helping to discover them and to influence them in a favourable direction. Over the years of practice I encountered people who had also gone through Terezín

and other camps. They recounted to me their fates and I understood them, sympathized with them. I saw before me the delayed results of war's suffering. I realized that I was faced with an extremely important problem that requires far more attention than it has received so far. Some scientific conferences have been devoted to it, but there is much to be done. An expert psychological approach to this complex set of problems after a considerable lapse of time can make it possible, on the one hand, to understand the reasons for the mental disturbances of the patient and, on the other, to bring about an influence for the better. The following lines are dedicated to this great end.

(1) INTRODUCTION

The large number and the quality of the studies dealing with the problem of the concentration camps can to a certain extent be considered as indicators of the intensity of interest of cultural workers, scientists and the public, and of their attempts to describe the unknown aspects of this question that continues to have current importance, and to learn new facts. It is noteworthy that in recent years there has been an increase in number of publications in our country concerned with questions of the persecution of Jews in the period of the last war. There are many reasons for this phenomenon. I should like to point out at least a few psychological factors.

Immediately after the end of the war the traumatic experiences were still too vivid and the memories were fresh and true to life. The people affected by the war concentrated their forces on the most necessary tasks, those connected with restoring the values that had been destroyed. The tales of the few who had survived the suffering of the concentration camps seemed unbelievable, unreal to the others. People tried not to comprehend or take in any more horrors of war, for it was still too close. The stories told by former prisoners were often received with a condescending smile or with hysterical and feigned sympathy by those who had not been affected directly or indirectly by a similar fate. Some even considered the

reports to be distorted, exaggerated, or the invented products of the demented brains of people who wanted to arouse sympathy and get attention. Frankl(6) cites in this respect Cohen: "A person who has never had any sort of personal experience in a concentration camp cannot have the slightest conception of what life is like in one."

The former inmates lacked the systematically classified proof that was needed in order to convince people at the time, plus the longer period necessary to go over from an imperfect attempt to sense a situation that reason could not grasp and arrive at an unprejudiced, critical analysis of the causes and the results of past events. It was necessary to overcome the revulsion of feeling and rejection, and to arrive at a historical and objective evaluation of events. This complicated process required a lapse of many years' time.

(2) DIFFICULTY OF A SCIENTIFIC PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THIS PROBLEM

It is extremely rash to attempt, after an interval of twenty years, to make a scientific analysis of one's own experiences in a period of about two years' internment (1942-43). There is nothing one can do but draw a few psychological observations and findings from a situation that, from the standpoint of method, must be considered as a unique, unrepeatable, psychological experiment (16). A number of authors have attempted long before this to classify their experiences (5; 16) and have attempted to derive from this some more generalized findings (6; 10; 16). The motive for my article is to attempt a formulation of some problems connected with life in Terezín, from the standpoint of experimental and clinical psychology.

Here it is necessary to emphasize the difference between the professional psychological approach to the question of concentration camps and literary art forms or other special approaches. In all cases the same three sources of information can serve: (1) subjective recollections that are not very reliable and are inexact, uncertain, and incomplete after a longer lapse of time. The method of reconstruction of past events is, therefore, not sufficiently reliable; (2) written and photographic documents that help to make recollections more exact and to reconstruct at least partially some events (13); (3) scientific studies, primarily in the field of medicine (15; 7), that would give data on the condition of health of the prisoners after liberation and in which, among other things, the mental state was examined also.

I believe that, while the task of a writer is mainly to describe as faithfully as possible the atmosphere of the environment, to describe the characters and changes in them during the time of imprisonment and perhaps to reflect, from a certain standpoint, on the fundamental philosophical problems of life in our time, it is the object of the professional psychologist to attempt a precise formulation of the problems and try to derive more general relationships between internment in Terezín and changes in the mental state of the prisoners and, finally, attempt to predict the further course of the mental life of persons who have survived internment.

Figures in brackets refer to bibliography at end of article.


TEREZÍN
1943

42 On the bastion (Jo Spier)

43 Execution (Leo Haas)





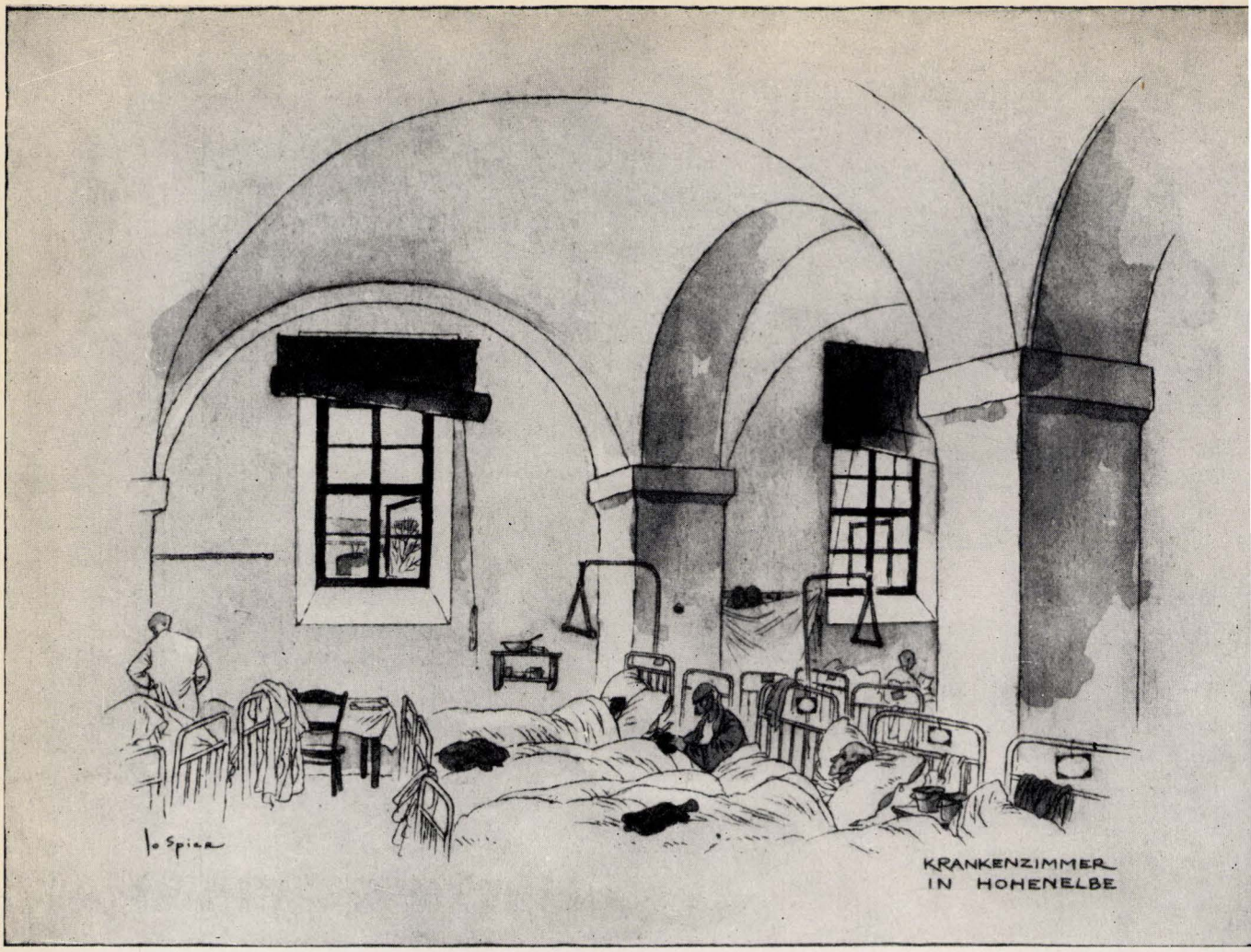
44 Execution (Leo Haas)



45 Dwellings for the feeble-minded (Bedřich Fritta)

46 At the deathbed (Malvina Schalková)





47 Hospital (Jo Spier)



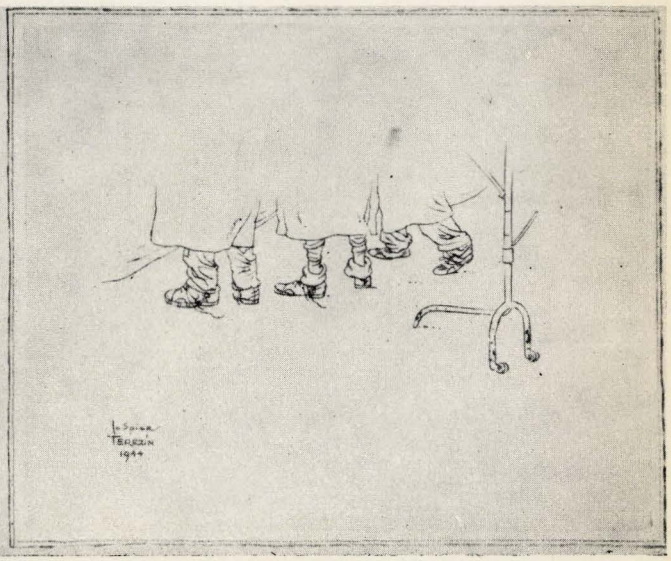
48 The patient (Malvina Schalková)



49 Hospital (unknown artist)

50 An operation (Jo Spier)







51 The old and the ill (Leo Haas)

(3) SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF LIFE IN TEREZÍN FROM THE PSYCHOLOGICAL STANDPOINT

Terezín was conceived of as a modern ghetto, i.e., a place where Jews from Bohemia and Moravia, and from other European countries occupied by Germans in the Second World War, were to be concentrated by force. The special title and statute of the Terezín ghetto led some to attempt a distinction between those interned in Terezín and those in other camps called concentration camps.

From the psychological aspect, Terezín ghetto can be considered a concentration camp *sui generis* in which were gathered persons who were regarded, according to certain criteria, as unsuitable, unfriendly, or otherwise undesirable for the "Great German Reich." As in other concentration camps, there thus arose in Terezín an involuntary fellowship of people of various ages, of both sexes, of different degrees of education, of various professions and ethnological origin, held together for a lenghthy period. The criteria of selection were worked out with extreme thoroughness according to the Nürnberg Laws, just as other political or ideological views were the deciding factor for selection of persons for other concentration camps. Therefore, the Terezín ghetto can be considered as a concentration camp, in which those who were interned there were classified according to special criteria in specific living conditions.

The following main circumstances may be considered as special conditions of internment in Terezín:

(1) All the persons brought there had been subjected for several years to a process of gradual limitation of freedom and diminishing of human dignity, carried out by a series of legal measures (for more details see work cited in note 10). This period in time can be called the preparatory period.

(2) It was chiefly whole families who were taken to Terezín, according to lists prepared in advance, in transports—period of deportation.

(3) Internment in the Terezín camp meant a sudden, radical change of environment for the whole family, together with a loss of property, of employment and of the opportunity for education—period of internment.

In the following portion of our article we shall deal in more detail with each of the above-mentioned special features of the Terezín ghetto.

(1) PREPARATORY PERIOD

Deportation to Terezín was only the final link in the chain of preparatory measures. A number of regulations and decrees had been leading systematically to the isolation of the Jews and to their social and personal degradation. Racial persecution deliberately undermined and violated the fundamental conditions for a healthy mental life: self-confidence, satisfaction with one's work, the possibility of satisfying basic needs, the possibility of making free decisions and of freely living one's life.

In the process of gradual degradation of Jews by the Nazi measures one may perceive several important factors.

(a) isolation, i.e., separation from the previous sources of social contact, chiefly at work,

(b) deprivation, i.e., suffering from lack of some important needs. "Psychic deprivation is the state that arises as a result of life situations where the subject is not given the opportunity of satisfying some of his basic (vital) psychic needs to a sufficient extent and over a rather long period." (14)
(c) frustration, setting in whenever the organism meets more or less insurmountable obstacles or difficulties on the way to satisfaction of some vital needs. (Rosenzweig, S.—see 3 and 14.)
(d) levelling, i.e., loss of individuality, overlooking of capabilities and talents of the individual, his merits, his education, and finally, his name.

In the process of a long period of systematic application of these principles there usually occurred serious changes in the mental life of the overwhelming majority of those afflicted. As a result of the intensifying of burdening factor over a long period of time and in many forms, there often was found to be a heightened sensitivity, even a morbid sensitivity, a marked inconstancy of emotions, a predominance of negative moods, lack of attention, lack of concentration amounting to distraction, lapses of memory, feelings of persecution, of inferiority, and, finally, occasional changes in behaviour, sometimes very marked, such as timidity, distrust, and so on. (1)

Forced isolation from social contacts, including cultural sources, by the method of issuing one prohibition after another, led in a number of cases to disturbances and changes—at first temporary, and later continuing a longer period of time—in disposition. This process can be considered one of the factors leading to the origin of schizothymization (16), i.e., to forming individuals who are penned up, cautious, anxious, meticulous, distrustful, uncertain, fearful and timid. In the case of some of the more sensitive individuals, there can occur a more permanent retreat into one's own ego (autism), or a disturbance in the ego or feelings of alienation from the external world. Isolation has led also to disturbances in emotional relations to surroundings, to changes in the gradation of values, to a loss of interest. The reality of life was becoming more and more cruel and unfriendly, there was no real protection from it, no possibility of escape. There remained only the paths of unreal escape into the past, into reveries, into one's own reflections and thoughts about existence, about the meaning of life, or into mysticism and religion. People chose the path that best suited their natural constitution, age, and spiritual or emotional maturity. It seems that the best protection against the increasing difficulties were life experiences, realistic attitudes and a stable view on life.

Related to isolation is deprivation, suffering as a result of not satisfying important needs. There can be various kinds of deprivation, according to which impulses are restricted or cut off. The most important is sensory and emotional deprivation. It is quite surprising how little the experience of interned Jews has been used for scientific analysis. These Jews were subjected over a long period of time to selective sensory and emotional deprivation, that is, for a number of years they were unable to have contact with certain sensual and emotional impulses. In experiments with sensory deprivation (14), authors describe the onset of lighter or more serious mental disturbances in some persons who submitted voluntarily to experiments. Many had to end the experiment prematurely. A lack of emotional impulses and stable emotional relationships can have especially serious mental consequences in

children and adolescents (14). A gradual sensual and emotional deprivation, together with perceptible worsening and stereotyping of the environment, can be seen as cause of a gradual worsening in the mental and emotional life of those persecuted, so that it finally becomes merely biological, simple, and primitive, to such an extent that it reminds us of the lower stages of mental life (6). In reality it is a matter of a temporary or a more permanent reduction in the mental life, connected with an over-all physiological and biological reduction in vitality under radically worsened living conditions.

The period preceding internment in Terezín was marked by a chronic frustration of needs, i. e., by insurmountable obstacles in the way of their satisfaction. Biological needs were frustrated (hunger, thirst, sexual desires), cultural and social needs were also. Chronic frustration gradually led to raising the threshold of frustration tolerance; people grew accustomed to do without much that had formerly seemed completely essential to life. The original increase in aggressivity, that we often see in psychological experiments with frustrations (2), appeared as a chronically heightened irritability, later alternating with depression and apathy.

Levelling out, the deliberate disregard of individual characteristics, was one of the further pernicious measures of the refined psychological war waged by the fascists. Gradual replacement of names by the Star of David and the Biblical names of Israel or Sarah, followed by the use of numbers instead of names in the transports, led to the destruction of self-affirmation, an increase in feelings of inferioritv and in attempts to compensate, and sometimes resulted in complete passivity, yielding and dullness. Signs of dissent, ill will, protests and revolts were less frequent.

Some of the above-mentioned psychological observations document the fact that the deportation and internment of the Jews in Terezín were preceded by systematic psychological measures leading to psychic disturbances or in some cases to the physical liquidation of the victims. The continual and deliberate intensifying of these measures I consider to be an important specific sign affecting the origin of mental changes in Jews in Terezín or in other ghettoes.

(2) THE PERIOD OF DEPORTATION

The deportation of Jewish families to Terezín meant a sudden, irrevocable change in their way of life, a radical disruption of the life stereotypes they had formed (customs, attitudes, views, needs, gradation of values). As distinct from emigration, deportation was an involuntary change, without the possibility of learning in advance about the conditions of future life or of influencing them in any way. The transport to Terezín was a sudden transition from the gradual worsening of familiar conditions to unknown and provisional living conditions, connected with possibilities of endangering all values including the most basic: one's own life and that of persons near and dear.

A sudden change in way of life always means a considerable burdening of the organism, primarily the nervous system. A long period of expecting this change led in a number of cases to a weakening of the nervous system, to neurasthenia, together with a lower resistance to changes and to external traumatization. Of course

it is important what kind of nervous system is exposed to this long period of difficulties, but I believe that a long burdening and frustration of basic needs for life can lead to temporary or permanent changes in the mental life of practically every person.

The call-up for the transport could mean, for especially weak persons, the final impulse for putting a definitive end to life. For others it was a test of the ability to adapt to new living conditions and of the force of the impulse of self-preservation. It was necessary to concentrate on what was important to preserve life and to sever oneself from everything that was subordinate from this standpoint. Then began the necessity of a substantial reduction in needs and a classification of things according to the possibility of preserving life. This was not easy. Many who had been accustomed to judge life exclusively by material values tried hysterically to save as many possessions as possible, with the irrational faith that, after all, they might perhaps succeed in saving something. The brutal pressure of life's reality was obviously too strong, so that it could not fail to undermine the ability of some, at least in part, to think soberly and critically, and this then was replaced by superstition, premonitions, hopes, faith, and mystical intuition.

Boarding the transport meant days of supreme physical and psychic tension. There appeared a fear of the unknown, of an uncertain future and, under this burden, came a temporary weakening of faith and of hopes for a happy turn of affairs. Most of the people entered the transport in a changed mental state: outwardly apathetic, helpless and defenceless individuals, inwardly suffering and broken by the events that had overwhelmed them. Their sole endeavour was to survive the episode awaiting them, return as soon as possible to the place whence they came, and to continue the life that had been disturbed. They all knew that it would be a hard trial, but they differed in their estimates of how long it would be: optimists counted the months, pessimists the years.

Some ask why there was no revolt, why people did not resist their unjust fate more, why they did not try to escape. The prime need for revolt is organization, activity and an immediate goal. A successful revolt can be carried out only by people who are trying to achieve something definite, even if realizing their intentions can differ somewhat in details. The systematic persecution of Jews over a long period was, however, aimed deliberately at replacing all certainties of life by uncertainties, normal life by a provisorium, a home by a ghetto where one could see only a small possibility, and yet *some* opportunity, for survival. How could such a broken group of people revolt, when they were so thoroughly isolated from the rest of the population and from weapons? It was necessary to resist internally, to escape to a place where was no possibility of persecution, to ideas, desires and hopes, to retreat from the unfavourable outer world and enclose oneself in the barriers of recollections. There came a lowering of needs, interests, initiative and everything for which many were distinguished in favourable times, to a minimum, and preparing oneself for a spiritual "hibernation" (6) with the one aim: survive! It was in this state of mind that many left their home town, their friends, the familiar landscape and beloved places. All of a sudden, the land where they went seemed alien, distant, and there occurred a gradual alienation, a retreat from external influences, and an inhibiting defense mechanism set in.

Nevertheless, even under these conditions, there were individuals who remained unbroken and were prepared in their minds for active resistance, for rebellion, which they were postponing for the time being.

(3) INTERNMENT PERIOD

The period of actual internment can, in accordance with other authors (6), be divided into the phase of arrival (admittance shock), the initial adapting, then the actual period of internment, and finally the phase of leaving Terezín in a transport "to the East." We must consider liberation and the period immediately afterwards, and finally the time of delayed results, as a special period. Cohen (6) writes of the phases of initial reaction, adapting and resignation.

Internment in Terezín influenced the mental, and often the physical development, of every inmate in a decisive way. The amount, continuance and type of these changes is primarily dependent on the length of stay in Terezín, the age when the inmate arrived at the camp, the socio-economic environment from which he had come, the length of the preparatory period, the structure of personality before the initial persecution and the extent of disturbance in the period before deportation. Further factors are education, profession, and intellectual and emotional maturity of each prisoner. It has been shown that there are many factors that affect the harm done by a unique traumatic experience in the period of imprisonment, and so far it has not been possible to classify these in order of importance.

The stay in the Terezín ghetto meant a serious interference in the psychic and physical life of the individual, which could temporarily, for a longer period of time, or permanently disturb the structure of his personality, damage the different psychic functions, dislocate the abilities acquired in previous life, slow up or stop (sometimes even speed up) the development of talents, capabilities and gifts. The onset of these changes, their intensity and continuance differed according to the individual "resistance" and special characteristics of each inmate.

There are people who wonder at the extent of these changes and some even doubt that it is possible for a person, after such traumatic and long-lasting experiences, to remain completely intact psychically, to be quite normal. A question posed in this way cannot be simply answered. Although many former inmates do not show at first glance any marked deviations from normal behaviour or from ordinary mental performance, we may assume that the strong and continuing traumatization has an undoubted effect, whether it is temporary or permanent, evident or latent, on the mentally life of a person, and especial on his emotional life. I believe that the traumata cause changes, primarily in the emotional life, and that there appear an intensified sensitivity, lability, anxiety, and depressions, in some cases aggressivity; the feelings are narrower in range and emotional relationships less deep and lasting. Another indicator of mental imbalance is a lapse in attention and loss of memory, the learning process is slowed and deteriorates, the spiritual life becomes stereotyped, poor in content and form, the ability to adapt becomes worse. Many of these disturbances are mentioned in studies concerned with delayed results of confinement in a concentration camp (4; 7; 8; 9).

Cohen (6) asserts that life in a concentration camp has shown that man's ability to

adapt is much greater than one could assume *a priori*. "Man is able to limit his satisfaction of vital needs to a minimum that escapes the imagination of anyone who has not experienced a concentration camp himself" (10). Man's ability to adapt has, however, definite limits, both in regard to the intensity of a unique short-term trauma, and in regard to the length of time a continuing burden lasts. The results of harmful influences can appear in the organism in the mental sphere either directly, or, more frequently, after a certain time of latency, after a period of time separating the subject from the real danger. It has been found that mental disturbances often do not appear until the period of relaxation, i.e., a certain time after liberation from the concentration camp (9).

The stay in Terezín led the overwhelming majority of the inmates to mobilize their need for self-preservation. This tendency, together with the need for nourishment, became the main force determining the behaviour of the inmates in the considerably simplified inter-personal situations. It is understandable that the considerable reduction in interests and the concentration on basic biological needs led many to have a limited range of behaviour traits, to the elimination of social factors, defences and pretences. There was an increase in number of asocial traits of behaviour (mainly theft and "šlojs" or "schleus"(1)—see 10), one could observe a battle for life, for privileged positions in the camp, or in saving oneself from transport, etc. On the other hand, however, there were individuals who retained their cultural interests and their ideals in life, frequently in seemingly sharp contradiction to harsh reality and to the direct, primitive impulse of self-preservation.

The time of arrival at Terezín was a sudden radical change in the life environment, that brought on a serious mental crisis in some less resistant individuals (Frankl: "Psychic shock"—6). This psychic shock could cause rapid death of weakened individuals, mainly elderly people, and in the case of others there usually was a more or less rapid adaptation to the new living conditions. Some people, on arriving in the concentration camp, had a feeling as if they were moving in a dream. According to Knobloch (11), these persons had symptoms of depersonalization.

The actual stay in Terezín was marked to a certain extent by an increasing use of the psychic pressure we have already mentioned (isolation, deprivation, frustration, levelling). But the maximum application of these principles did not occur usually until the inmates were in other camps to which they were transferred from time to time.

Isolation under Terezín conditions was completely of the concentration camp type: the ghetto was encircled by barriers and contact with the surrounding population was made practically impossible. Postal contact was at a minimum, the possibility of obtaining cultural information was negligible. Men lived separate from the women, boys and girls were in separate homes. Persons who were incapacitated for work and the sick were isolated. It was possible to have contact between members of a family, but the time of meeting was regulated (only in exceptional instances could some families live together). A special feature of Terezín, as compared with other concentration camps, was the imprisonment of children and of aged and ill people. These age categories were most affected, both in regard to the immediate consequences and in regard to the delayed effects of internment (4; 8; 9).

(1) Term often used in Terezín to mean theft of official property.

Deprivation of experience also took the form in Terezín of a further limitation on opportunity for sensual experience and knowledge. Sensory deprivation caused a marked diminution of esthetic feeling, it disturbed the emotional relations between men and women, and between the generations. The deprivation of work was very hard to bear, with the impossibility of systematic, purposeful activity that accorded with the inmates' previous education and qualifications. Life thus became monotonous, time went slowly and the lack of refreshing change caused many to become gradually more passive and apathetic. It is admirable that under such conditions it was possible to carry on teaching of a high quality in a semi-legal way in the youth homes. This enabled many young people to pursue their studies after liberation, without any great loss of time (10). Equal admiration should be accorded some of the artists and scientists who perseveringly, and often successfully, tried to break through the barrier of psychic deprivation by holding concerts and lectures. The straitened atmosphere of Terezín also made for a more rapid maturing of a number of valuable literary, musical and artistic works.

Under the conditions in the Terezín ghetto there often were evidences of emotional deprivation, especially in children and adolescents. Relationships among people lost their emotional depth, the feeling of satisfaction, joy and happiness disappeared. Life flowed along in a state of anxiety, fear and uncertainty about one's own fate and that of one's nearest and dearest. Amidst these negative moods there was only an occasional glimmer of hope, and this was often mixed with the unfounded reports and rumours that spread with dizzying speed (16). At such moments, imagination went from the past over the present into the future and depicted the moments of return and the future life.

Frustration in necessities was an everyday matter in the Terezín ghetto life. There was a constant shortage of food, leading to hunger deprivation; the food distributed was not varied, but monotonous. As time passed, existence was reduced to the interval between meals, the way time was spent was more and more influenced by the physiological processes of digestion.

The psychic life of Terezín inmates was significantly affected by a loss of the meaning of life and its replacement by irrational hope in a new and better life. Loss of the meaning of life was eloquently termed by Frankl (6) existential frustration.

"Existential frustration occurs in practice when a person doubts the meaning of his existence, when his sense of life has become dubious, the former sense has lost its justification and a person does not know what to do next, when he doubts the meaning of life in general or goes through moral conflict or a conflict of conscience" (12). This state was intensified by the always temporary nature of Terezín life (16). Among the basic needs of man are the need for certainty, for support, for perspectives, for stable and lasting values and personal relationships, or at least the possibility of solving even an uncertain situation by one's own decision. All these needs were deliberately frustrated by instability and changing of conditions of Terezín life, irregular alternation of dreariness, boredom and monotony, and then attacks of uncertainty and danger in the form of the transports.

Chronic frustration increased the significance of completely secondary things in ordinary life. There was an increase in quarrels over trifles: for a better bed, a larger piece of bread, the slightest possibility of distinguishing oneself. All the

more remarkable were the examples of humaneness, sympathy and self-sacrifice, of a purity of character that was not rare by any means.

The whole life of Terezín was constantly haunted by the spectre of transports to the East, to the unknown, which meant the immediate danger of death. No one knew when his turn would come, where he would go, when, why, and with whom. The transports were the ominous culmination of the provisional life in Terezín, they were the harbingers of the next stage on the way to the "final solution to the Jewish question". In the periods of transports that arrived irregularly according to some inscrutable rule, life became most burdensome. For many it became unbearable and evidence of desperation increased, the battle for self-preservation intensified, and frustration reached a peak. Even under these conditions, however, most of the people pushed away their fear of death (16), the number of suicides was surprisingly small (6). There finally emerged from these battles a group of people who were stronger and more resistant, and the transports carried away a group of passive, apathetic people who did not oppose the loading into freight cars carrying them off—probably to their death —to where others had gone before them.

In Terezín the individual lost all significance. Transports came and went. A person came with one number and left with another. The opportunity for private life was completely lacking; dozens of people lived in the rooms, the streets were crowded, there was no permission to go into the countryside, there was nowhere a person could be alone for even a moment. This situation that actually meant an excessive number of stimuli also was a deprivation. In addition to lack of sleep, it contributed to an extraordinary degree to an increase in general irritability that sometimes became hypersensitivity. Quarrels among those who lived together were a still greater burden on the already labile nervous system of the inmates.

One was always surrounded by people and still tried to get away from them, to retreat into oneself and find support within one's own self, find certainty and understanding. In the formless, insufficiently organized crowd, the individual became a meaningless particle—subject, like the others around him, to all deviations brought by external influences, and very often succumbing to panic. Despite all unfavourable conditions, many tried to keep for themselves and for their closest friends and relatives at least something of their former personality, in order that they might begin, when they were again able to breathe freely, with what they were before they were forcibly deformed.

The levelling process contrasts, for the majority of the inmates, with the methods by which the Nazis tried to create a camp leadership. By means of the so-called Führer principle, they selected a few individuals and gave them functions, responsibility and power. Most of the inmates selected in this way were badly affected and there were changes in their nature brought by this "promotion" (16).

The length of this study permits mention of only a few examples of life in Terezín that show the continual intensification of psychic burden in this concentration camp, where external intervention gave evidence of a continually improved application of principles that promoted the liquidation of the inmates' psyche.

4. PSYCHIC STATE OF FORMER TEREZÍN INMATES AFTER LIBERATION

The attention of the latest psychological research is concentrated more and more on the psychic state of former inmates of concentration camps in the period of liberation and immediately afterwards, and particularly the period when some time had elapsed after internment. A number of studies have been made of the question of long-term effects of internment and also the problem of short-term, reversible, and long-term irreversible, lasting psychic changes. Some authors deal with the question of the so-called concentration camp syndrome. Various research workers include in this syndrome various symptoms, ascribing a different importance to them, but one may say that there is a definite agreement among them. Cohen (cited in 6), reckons among the psychic effects of a stay in a concentration camp, apathy, prolonged reaction time, a lower capacity to concentrate attention and a worsening of memory. Helweg-Larsen and co-workers (7) consider the most important psychic changes resulting from imprisonment to be a restriction and brutalization of emotional and moral spheres, a worsening of memory, a diminished capacity for spontaneous reaction, increased irritability and emotional instability, a decline in the libido, dullness that sometimes tends toward apathy, and rare acute psychoses. Depressive reactions, anxiety neuroses, hysterical symptoms and attempts at suicide were rarely observed. In the materials of the medical conference of the International Federation of Fighters Against Fascism (F.I.R.) (15) mention was made of the frequent neuropsychic results of internment in concentration camps, such as psychic asthenia, intellectual asthenia, difficulties combined with various sensations of pain and disturbances in sleeping.

The data given above show that the probability of psychic changes as a result of imprisonment are relatively great. Eitlinger (4) believes that "only the intensity in quality and quantity of the burden in the concentration camp seem to be decisive for the seriousness of both the concentration camp syndrome and the organic syndrome of the brain."

The immediate reaction to liberation took the form in some persons of nervous exhaustion that showed itself in depression, fatigue, torpidity, or weeping, or in some cases an excessive need for sleep. Only after this reaction had disappeared was there a greater zest for life, hunger, yearning for home and family and other behaviour traits that showed a gradual adaptation to the new and better living conditions. Some inmates had "liberation shock" in a much more violent form: immense joy and then a desire for revenge, for battle, for stealing what they could and then return home. According to Frankl (6), some of the liberated inmates again showed feeling of depersonalization (life as a dream, "this can't be I").

After the immediate reaction that sometimes lasted weeks and even months, there came a period of rehabilitation, when there was a need for becoming a part of the new social and labour conditions as rapidly and thoroughly as possible. This period required a maximum exertion of efforts from the weakened former inmates.

The destructive psychic burdens disappeared, the isolation, deprivation, frustration and levelling were for the major part in the past. The élan with which many threw themselves into the new life was surprising: family ties were renewed, many young

people got married (9), children were born to relatively older parents, the property that had been stolen appeared again, and life was again filled with labour, entertainment, and rest. Life had meaning again.

Despite the now good external living conditions, the suffering during the war still had effect on the psychic life of most of the former inmates. The internal psychic rehabilitation took place much more slowly and with greater difficulty than did the adaptation in external behaviour. After four years or more had elapsed, there began to appear symptoms of psychic imbalance that were mostly of a neurotic type (9). According to Chodoff (8), the explanation of the type and length of psychic changes after imprisonment includes primarily such factors as age, length of imprisonment, destruction of the home and the death of closest relatives, dissonance between ideas held during the time of suffering and the reality of the world after liberation and so on.

It was found that a long period of traumatization, especially in young people, disturbed the possibility of making a proper adaptation and upset the psychic balance. Ota Klein (10) gives as examples of difficulty in adapting, suffered by young people after liberation, an extreme unwillingness to submit to any sort of discipline, passivity, little initiative, difficulties in making decisions, as results of premature loss of parents and a lack of goal in life. The longer-lasting psychic consequences are exceptions, in his opinion. Another striking trait was a definite moral laxness and indifference, shown in tolerance of judgment on moral delinquencies of every kind.

Children who were three years in Terezín, beginning as infants, had disturbances in the emotional sphere for a long time: panic horror of animals, constant fear that someone would take something from them (toys, food), anxiety when someone left them and a general, excessive distrust of surroundings and people. In the case of school children and adolescents there predominated a distrust of people, a loss of faith in people, a hypercritical nature, jealousy, inability to thank people. There was frequently a feeling of emptiness. In the case of children who spent their earliest years under concentration camp conditions, their general physical, and more particularly their neuropsychic, development was usually affected as a whole. Most children had character disturbances, the chief trait of which was an abnormal relation toward human surroundings and their own ego. Certain traces were left by the heavy suffering in practically all of them, seen primarily in greater vulnerability, a vacillating balance, an easy tendency to collapse over changes in their life situation. But there are very great individual differences. Children from stable families overcame the conditions much better and so, moreover, did children reared to independence. In all the children affected there remained a certain anxiety (a free interpretation of the conclusions in note 14).

We have given at least some of the psychic changes mentioned by various authors as a result of long-term traumatization in concentration camps, both in regard to adults and in regard to children and adolescents. The assessment of delayed effects of long-term psychic burden on former inmates of the Terezín concentration camp still remains an urgent task of psychology and psychiatry. The results obtained can contribute valuable knowledge not only for practical work, but also for the solution of a number of questions in theoretical psychology.

4. CONCLUSION

I have attempted to give at least a brief survey of the psychological problems of life in Terezín, on the basis of my own subjective experiences, after more than a twenty-year interval, on the basis both of a confrontation of the experiences and known facts, and of results of experimental and clinical psychology. The purpose of the study was to attempt a formulation of the chief characteristics of the Terezín ghetto as compared with other concentration camps, and to delimit the basic principles of long-term psychic trauma to which the Jews were subjected in the last war.

It was found that the unique traumatic life experience of a stay in the Terezín concentration camp could leave both short-term and long-term effects in the psychic life of former inmates. One of the current tasks of psychology and psychiatry should be an attempt at a more detailed explanation of the dynamics of these psychic changes and to help those affected to rid themselves in the shortest possible time, and to the greatest possible extent, of the psychic consequences of imprisonment.

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The Sheep of Lidice

BY ILSE WEBER

Fluffy, yellow-white sheep trudgingly trot along.
Two shepherdesses follow the flock at dusk with a song.
It's a vision of peace, yet you, in a hurry, stop still,
as if the breath of everything dead passed by with a chill.
Fluffy, yellow-white sheep, removed from their native land,
their homesteads burnt down, their keepers killed in the end.
Oh, for all the men in the village the death was the same.
A little Bohemian village, and such a disaster and shame.
The diligent womenfolk, tending the flock, were carried away,
the children, stroking the lambs, were torn from their play.
The little houses, dwellings of peace, destroyed one by one.
Only the cattle was spared but a whole village was gone.
These are the sheep of Lidice, and this is their rightful place:
in the city of the homeless the homeless beasts of grace.
Linked by a cruel fate and closed in by a wall —
the world's most tortured people and the saddest flock of all.
The sun has set and the last ray disappeared,
And somewhere near the barracks a Jewish song is heard.

CHAPTER V

LIFE IN TEREZÍN

"The work was hard, the tempo fast,
forces weak and the way long . . .
and many there were who did not
reach its end . . ."

BUT LIDICE IS IN EUROPE! / F. R. Kraus

THE TEREZÍN TRANSPORTS / Dr. Emil Utitz

THE AFFAIR OF THE PAINTERS
OF TEREZÍN / Leo Haas

In the morning you shall say, 'Would it were evening!'
and at evening you shall say, 'Would it were morning!'
because of the dread which your heart shall fear, and
the sights which your eyes shall see. Fifth Book of Moses 28 : 67

F. R. KRAUS

BUT LIDICE IS IN EUROPE!



ONCE, under the old Hapsburg monarchy, a barracks used to exist here, quartering at the most 150 men of a Maria Theresia guard gunners' corps. Josephus II. Aug. P.P. Aeterni Huius Operis Fundamenta Iecit VI. ID. Oct. MDCCLXXX. is inscribed on the large greyish-brown marble tablet on the wall of the mighty casemate, the awesome spirit of the Middle Ages emanates from the crumbling red brick walls, ramparts and entrenchments. Heavy black wings beating, a flock of ravens flies thunderingly across the sky and disappears on the fiery-red horizon. In 1918, when the Austro-Hungarian monarchy broke apart, young Czechoslovak artillerists took over the barracks. There were at the most 200 of them, and in 1939, the Prussians came, Hitler's gunners. About a hundred moved into the "Sudeten" barracks of Terezín. But today, about 6,500 male prisoners live in the very same barracks, mostly younger men, still fit for work, Jews from Prague, Bohemia and Moravia. The "Dresden" barracks as well as the "Hannover," "Bodenbach" and "Engineers" barracks are already occupied by Jewish prisoners. All barracks are still locked in Terezín. The workers from the workers' barracks cannot see their wives in the women's barracks. The children from the children's homes cannot get across to their mothers . . . But soon, very soon, after the forced evacuation of the Terezín population, the shoemakers, tailors, landlords, the grocers and greengrocers, there will be only one town of Jews, surrounded by barbed wire entanglements, entrenchments and walls, the "Altersparadies der europäischen Judenheit" (old-age paradise of European Jews) as the Nazis proclaim, as it resounds from the radio, telling of the ghetto of the 20th century.

Our works commando is marching "home." Swish, swash. The threefold echo of our steps is thrown backwards and forwards phantom-like between the facades of the tumble-down houses, most of them already empty, swish swash, a red rain-pipe, twisting into an obtuse angle at the bottom and rust-eaten, clatters down to the pavement. We go marching on, swish, swash. The yellow stars of David shine through the misty twilight, they arch over our hearts, we march in the middle of the uneven road, over the cobbles full of rubbish and dirt. Stifling stench of latrines and of rat excrements rises from the canals . . . Swish, swash, the large yellow stars shine in the sun: it is June, June 11th, 1942. We are marching through the dusty, crumbling streets of the future ghetto. Pot-bellied landlords have closed their pubs, have been forced to evacuate. The rusty shutters are drawn over the shops. Houses and schools stand empty. Soon, very soon, a new life will arise from the ruins, life in the ghetto, life in the Middle Ages, a bold jump backwards, centuries back . . . Our guards, regular Protectorate gendarmes, still with the silver lion of Bohemia on their greenish-grey helmets, are allowed to walk on the pavement. We must not set foot on it. Only right in the middle of the road, swish, swash. The gendarmes smoke, spit, and with bayonets up, accompany the group of young Jewish prisoners, all of whom have sprung from David's golden cradle . . .

And suddenly there appears on the corner of the house that turns blind windows towards the barracks, and that once served soldiers' love — up to this day, if you look carefully, you may decipher on the round red lamp above the entrance the inscription "Salon Kairo"—suddenly there is a huge, red poster. It still glistens damply, and has apparently just been put up: on top the black, repulsive eagle, below on the left in German, on the right in Czech, a long litany. We decipher with difficulty

a few sentences printed in italics . . . "SS-Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich, Vice Reichsprotector of Bohemia and Moravia and chief of SD and Sicherheitspolizei . . . on May 27th, 1942, murdered by a treacherous bomb . . . one of the greatest defenders of the idea of the German Reich . . . died in defence of the preservation and safeguarding of the Third Reich . . . an irreproachable National Socialist . . . inferior men, Jews, criminals . . ." There is suddenly disquiet in our ranks, passing like waves through our commando. The escort of gendarmes, armed with helmet, chin-strap, rifles, bayonets, revolvers, and 60 shots in their cartridge belts of brightly-yellow, sharp-smelling leather, they too become nervous . . . Heydrich justly punished! Swish, swash . . .

The huge gate of the "Sudeten" barracks gapes widely. According to regulation the ghetto police quickly take off their black-and-yellow stocking caps in front of the fat, plumed-hatted gendarmes and we march into the huge, wind-swept yard, crammed full with waiting prisoners, their tin plate or food tin in their callused hands. They are standing in queues, waiting before the two kitchens, the "Prague" and the "Brno" kitchen. On the left a group of unshaven prisoners in crumpled clothes is being taken to the latrine by some gendarmes. They are waiting for to-morrow's execution in the cells behind the gendarmes' guard-room, they are waiting for the rope behind the casemates of the "Aussig" barracks. The gallows have already been put up, they stand like an index-finger threatening against the sky. Hunch-backed, grinning, already put under alcohol today by the SS, the former servant of the post-mortem department of the Prague clinics on Charles Square, by the name of Fischer, gap-toothed, reeking, is constantly kept under "pressure and alcohol" by Camp Commander Obersturmführer Dr. Seidl, a mediocre Viennese actor and Camp Inspector Bergel, who was one of those responsible for the assassination of Bundes Chancellor Dr. Dollfuss . . . The "moribundi" . . . taken back from the latrine, already bear the pale, yellowish face of Hippocrates. It is just on noon. The Jewish "Labour Office" suddenly looks for a works group, quickly, quickly. Orderly Stampf runs excitedly to the first floor, to the rooms of the "Parille" hundred, the command of the "A.K. ists," young Jews from Prague, who had come to Terezín as the very first transport, the so-called "Aufbaukommando" transport. "Earthwork, earthwork"' shouts Stampf raspingly, excited and nervous. Tall Stampf is looking for Karl Parille, the leader of the hundred. He cannot find him, and so he instructs his second-in-command, "company-leader" Franta Krása, to get a group of thirty workers together.

"Fall in, fall in!" Stampf shouts excitedly. One, two, three, four, five, six, whoever crosses his path is lined up. Soon there are thirty men. I am one of them . . .

We set out, come to the gate where we have to stop. "Wait for the gendarmes!" And there they come, stumbling over one another in their hurry to get out of the guard room, putting on their knights' helmets, shouldering their rifles, fixing their chin-straps under their smoothly shaven chins. Oberwachtmeister Kubiňák curses, spits, sending yellow sputum in a wide arc through the gate. He is in command of the ten-men-strong group of gendarmes. We march through the yawning, windy gate. A green truck driven by always-drunk, toothless driver Řeháček is already drawn up outside. Řeháček is a civilian, owner of a truck that he uses for transport purposes, but in the services of the SS. We quickly jump in, Oberwachtmeister



The comingof a
transport (Otto Ungar)

Kubiňák and two very young gendarmes sit in front with the driver, the other seven gendarmes jump in with us . . . We drive off. We stand on top close together, we must not sit down, only the gentlemen of the gendarmerie are sitting, propped against the boards, smoking, spitting, taking a pull, now and then, from their flat field-grey bottles filled with cheap rum, again leaning against the boards, laughing, dozing . . . The engine hums, the truck clatters and clanks over the dirty ghetto pavement, we hang on to each other . . .

We stop in front of the "Construction Yard." "Eight men down and load up, quickly, quickly!" these are gendarme orders. We get hold of shovels, pick-axes, cramp-irons, two barrels filled with caustic lime . . . Lime, Lime! Yes, we guess already, yes, we know already: "Lime,lime!" I say quietly to Langendorf, the young composer from Prague and best of comrades. "Yes, Franta, lime!"

The journey goes on. Not towards Litoměřice, as usual, when we march or drive to work, no, this time in the opposite direction. Yellow name plates with black lettering . . . Hrobce, Slaný, . . . Villages lie quietly in the noon-day heat, cackling hens run out of our way, dogs bark and chase us to the end of the village, then they stop and look after us, their tails between their legs, fair-haired children play on green, flower-dotted meadows, white butterflies whir over sun-kissed, fresh young corn, yellow ducklings swim nimbly over dainty little village ponds, bumble-bees buzz by, the tender blades of grass bend in the warm wind . . . highways, villagers look up to us, mouths gaping, old people sit in the warm sun in front of their small, red-roofed cottages. A green truck with helmeted lansquenets, blinking bayonets on their rifles, in their midst a grey heap of prisoners supporting one another, on their breasts the yellow glistening star of David, turning towards the eternal sun . . .

Suddenly I am hungry. Each of us got one slice of black bread and a quarter of margarine for the hot journey. I start to eat, standing up, the truck jogs along, the artificial butter has melted in the paper, like a hungry dog I lick it out of the paper. "Direction Kladno!" says the inscription at the crossroads. And there, suddenly, smoke and flames, far, faraway, but already visible, on the right a village must be burning . . . And here the yellow signpost that bears the inscription "Lidice." I have never heard or read the name before in my life. The brakes whine, the truck stops. The air is thick with fog and smoke, our faces change, suddenly a stream of fire shoots up to the sky, one can taste bitter powder on one's dry tongue, our nerves are tight, our bodies tense . . . What is going to happen to us?

Our gendarmes jump off the truck and on orders from an unknown SS-man lie down in the burned grass under a blackened pear tree. Drunken driver Řeháček, whose flat feet are lost in huge SS-boots, is relieved at the wheel by a helmeted policeman. We drive on, slowly, at a walk; we drive into a brightly burning town. We hear the beams bursting and cracking, our truck shakes, beside us, before us, a spray of destruction, a terrifying struggle of horror, we are driving straight into Dante's Inferno, the picture of our time is reflected in the shimmer of the horizon, we walk, but not guided by Virgil, through the Inferno, St. Bernhard is not our guide today through purgatory . . . Will Beatrice, the beloved, take us to Paradise? Splinters are flying through the air, clods fly sky-high and cover our face with mud . . .

"Get out!" Everywhere black and grey-green SS, Schupo, Sipo (Security police),

Kripo (Criminal police) and Gestapo, many of them dead drunk, reeling through the ruins. We crawl along, through the blackened garden of a country-homestead... here . . . here it is, the Steyrcabriolet of our Camp Commander, party member Obersturmführer Dr. Seidl, yes, indeed, and beside his car, Seidl himself on tottering spider legs, his well-polished Prussian riding boots glisten through the blackish-grey smoke, he seems drunk, next to him his driver, Hauptscharführer Wostrell of Linz, further Obersturmführer Bergel, the Camp Inspector, and SS-men Polljak, Habenich, Schterba.

We walk on as in a dream . . . and here . . . here . . . here the dead lie on the ground! Shot! A colourful carpet bleeding from a thousand wounds . . . they are lying on their backs, on their chests, on the side, caps and hats have fallen off, hands under their bodies or arms out stretched, their eyes glassy, the white teeth in their red faces showing behind their drawn-up lips . . . the terrible white of their eyes, it glistens, shines, through the smoke and flames, the martyrs of Lidice, heroes of Bohemia, heroically dying miners and small householders, peasants and pensioners, the old parish priest, a boy, a dog . . . shot up and burnt trees, mattresses and pallets piled up in the background, formed the execution wall . . . The camp commander of Terezín makes a sign on the steaming ground with his riding whip with the silver bulldog handle. This is the spot where we shall dig. Franta Krása, our company leader, takes the order: "Twelve metres long, nine metres wide and four metres deep! You understand, you sons of bitches from Jericho, you pig-eaters, you world criminals and arse-holes?"

We start to dig. Mother Earth, dear, kind Mother of all Mothers, how we defame your holy name . . . again we tear wounds into your holy body, like that time, when the first of our brethren were hanged behind the "Aussig" barracks in the garrison town of her Majesty, the German Empress, Queen of Bohemia and Hungary, the Austrian Arch-Duchess, and we had to dig them in, to the cursings of the "Guard, whom the Führer loves," in the light of the gendarmes' torches, that time when the fat Bergel with the leather whip beat our bare backs, and his order in the language of Goethe resounded over the red casemates . . . round about us there is a clattering and groaning, thundering and cracking, walls burst, the end of the world seems near . . . burning beams hurtle rattling to the ground . . . we sink deeper and ever deeper into the darkness of black earth . . . "Above us flames and smoke, scared pidgeons flutter from one burning point to the other, can find no rest, for everything glows, growls, shouts, vomits, groans, weeps and roars, it is the misery of the world, a wild and gruesome pain rides a shy, emaciated nag through the world, and this pain has taken on the shape of a yellow skeleton in fluttering, white, blood-stained overall, a snow-white pigeon is quite alone, fluttering to and fro, the drunk monster in the Führer's uniform, Parteigenosse Obersturmführer Dr. Seidl draws his small revolver . . . puff . . . the pigeon in white, in the tender bride's veil of peace, drops to his feet, a gentle shudder passes through the white head, the pink eyes turn glassy, Seidl kicks the tiny bird down to us into the yawning mass-grave, kicks the small, pure, dead bird down with his Prussian, highly polished, elegant riding boot into the war grave of humanity . . . Suddenly thunder fills the air above us, the flames howl, invisible doors spring open, air pressure tears them out of invisible hinges, all the sins of humanity pass swirling down, a witches' dance has started with howling,

whistling, thumping, roaring, ringing and groaning, unknown voices shout, martyred mankind revolts against the terror of this century! We sink deeper and deeper. It is hot so near the glow. We sweat and starve. We work half-naked. We dig throughout the night. In the morning a fat Schutz-policeman in the helmet of the Teutenburger Forest throws each of us a piece of black bread, it soars through the air and we catch it like wild cats behind iron bars, eat it avidly within a few minutes and go on digging . . . Fog and smoke hang over us, a red glow stands above the garden over the farm, dawn breaks slowly . . . The yellow wax-figures of Seidl and Wostrell appear above the abyss. Both are smoking, dead drunk. Schutzpolizei are making aromatic soup, from stolen poultry, in the huge pots of the Lidice housewives . . . Suddenly the church breaks apart: a new metallic thundering breaks up the walls, the ringing of the bells resounds clearly, there is a thumping in the tower, flames roar up again, then suddenly the ringing stops, torn away from the roof the bell hurtles down, breaks through the wooden floor and ends with huge clattering on the stone floor, white smoke rolls out of the fallen nave . . . Next to me stands Karl Langendorf, young, beautiful, the composer, he stands there like a marble statue, his mouth wide open, he raises and lowers his fists . . . Then low singing sounds from his lips, it is Antonín Dvořák's Requiem . . . Requiem aeternam dona eis domine et lux perpetua luceat eis . . . A cloud of decay, dust and powder stands over his head, beside him the red poppies fade and marguerites lower tired, innocent heads, to lie down and die . . . Te decet hymnus, Deus in Sion, et Tibi reddetur . . . Terrible is the roaring sky over Karl Langendorf, but he goes on singing, he drowns out the terror of this time . . . Dies irae, dies illa solve saeclum in favilla, teste David et Sibylla . . . Ploughed up and torn up, rent asunder and treeless, is this spot of Bohemian land in the heart of Europe . . . A new fireworks: on pale stems bright spheres shoot up from the ground, blossom forth and are blown away, deadly seed over blood-soaked fields . . . a windy morning rises from the blood-drenched east and Karl Langendorf sings Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus . . . Dominus Deus Sabaoth . . the earth shakes and shivers and cries from its depth and revolts and gives forth tongues of flames from glowing volcanoes and jumps sky-high from fountains and roars up and breaks into myriad cliffs, raises stones and smoke and poison and earth rearing into the air . . . and the air rages like a wounded cyclop and hurtles the deadly rocks down to us again . . . bricks drop onto the empty church benches, jump high again and dance to and fro as if it were a festive church holiday, then the beams clatter down and break the roof, walls and vaultings shake, pictures of saints in gold frames fall from the old walls, and thunder to the ground . . . the priestless chancel burns . . . mass is being celebrated for the last time here . . . Hosana in excelsis . . . Benedictus, qui venit in nomine Domini. Hosana in excelsis . . .

We are down below. Finished . . . The work has been done . . . Now we shall stand at the edge to be shot. We shall tumble head first into the pit, then lime, then the others over us, the martyrs of Lidice, then lime and lime again, then SS and Schupo to dig us in . . . Lidice was the name of this little town in Bohemia, Lidice, it was in Europe!

Seidl starts to scream in his shrill, effeminate voice: "Out of there, get moving, you Hebrews!" We lift each other up, crawl over our comrades' backs, then they drag us out from above, we must take the dead's blood-stained shoes off, quickly there is

a heap of these shoes that will soon set out on their march, their march through the world . . . Then Seidl screams: "Take their identity cards." We set to. The red citizens' cards must be taken out of the blood-soaked clothes . . . Paper money must be handed to Seidl, he stuffs it in all the pockets of his uniform . . . pushes it down his elegant, high, Prussian riding boots, then Wostrell stuffs his pockets, pushes the money under the "Ostmark" cap with the pointed rim. "Dig them in!" screams Seidl. We dig and scrape, we work thirty-six hours. Without break. Seidl has picked on Langendorf: "You hairy orangoutang, you! You swindler from Jericho!" His sharp, leather riding whip has split Langendorf's scalp. The blood runs down over his back, he stands upright, looking at the sky, his lips move . . . Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi dona eis requiem sempiternam . . .

"Fall out!" Schutzpolizei takes us out of the smoking ruins. The green truck, Řeháček on reeling-drunk, bent legs, toothless, laughing a pagoda-like, poisonous laugh, gendarmes jump up from the blackened grass where they have been lying, click their heels before the Nazis, we crawl up and the journey starts into the falling night, there is a roaring in our ears, as if sea water were entering a drowning man's brain, up in the truck we tumble down over each other, sleep a dozing bloodsoaked leaden sleep, but a kind of dozing only, nevertheless, we drive through the greenish-blue night to the ghetto, past the stinking canals, rats rush away, the huge barrack gates open up like the jaws of a phantastic monster, the truck stops. Gendarmes quickly jump down, spit, smoke, curse, "Grave diggers, queers!" We totter through the old, wind-swept yard to the stairs on the right, our steps drag over the corridor, echo from the mosaic-covered stones, room 61, comrades are waiting, those that have remained at home. At the head of our bunks there already stand burning candles, the tiny yellow flames lick and flutter in the draught of the opening door, just as that time, when the first of our comrades were hanged. Comrades are singing the monotonous melody of the Kadish, stop, smother their joy, the tiny yellow flames are blown out, rest, worn-out rest and embraces under the dark cover of the night, we fall on our bunks . . .

Rest, worn-out rest, and then a voice is raised in the dark. It is the physician Dr. Grünfeld who speaks: "Comrades, you smell of blood, of martyrs' blood . . . mix it with your heart's blood and let it run through the veins and hearts of all humanity..."

I sink back. My eyes pass over the barred windows. Outside the night is of deepest black. And beneath me, on the lower bunk, Karl Langendorf sings quietly: "Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis . . ."

Then he adds in a low voice:

"But Lidice is in Europe!"

A spray of tiny stars glitters outside beyond the bars of the barrack windows above the steep gables of the black little ghetto houses . . .

Two Sonnets from Theresienstadt

BY KURT KAPPER

Night follows day, and day again the night.
They glide above our heads in empty space.
There is no link between them and this place,
as if we were mere puppets cast aside.

The world resounds in echo's distant flight.
We hear it passing by us without grace
and disappearing somewhere without trace.
And we sink deeper in our pit of fright.

In this our world of great events unending,
we're tossed about by blind and cruel force.
The cold-blue stars that look down from on high

and follow flickering our erring course,
consolingly radiate their understanding
and, circling, signal blessings from the sky.

(1943)

EMIL UTITZ

THE TEREZÍN TRANSPORTS



TRANSPORT! Transport! This terrible news ran from house to house on a frosty evening in late autumn 1941. Many clung to the hope that this was merely rumor. The strict prohibition against leaving the house after 8:00 in the evening made it harder to be certain about the truth or falsity of the report. Next morning it was clear that there would be a horrible evacuation by force of citizens of a state that did not belong to the Nazis, but which they had proclaimed, with brazen insolence, as their Protectorate.

Added to all the discouragement and persecution that had been their lot up to now, there came the evacuation, the journey into the dark to a gruesome destination. This fact burst like a bomb in their midst. Five transports were sent to Lodz. But this was only the beginning. Then came the transports to Terezín. Short pauses lulled many into the consoling thought that the devilish plan had been abandoned, but again and again new transports were listed: in Brno, in Budějovice or some other place in the provinces, and again and again from Prague.

Little by little everyone had to become accustomed to the idea that he would be called up himself. Almost everyone made ready. A special kind of knowledge was developed—to pack everything that was necessary into the approximate contents of the permitted fifty-kilogram limit. Long and hot debates were held on the concept of what was necessary. Volunteer aid was given those who sought advice. But no one had any very exact information, for only occasional underground reports trickled in. Besides, the luggage permission was usually a big hoax, for the Nazis stole a lot immediately and some of the rest was requisitioned on their orders at the entrance into the camp. What remained was generally very paltry and very much needed.

I myself received notice in July 1942, when in three one-day intervals ten transports were to be made ready. Entrance into the new Trade-Fair hall that gave refuge to a thousand "ghetto-ized" people, was the first step into prison, into the concentration camp, in a dismal company of exiles that had no Promised Land in sight, only pain, suffering and—not improbably—death.

The situation of the Bohemian Jews was especially precarious, because the short period between the Hitler invasion and the outbreak of war gave only a relatively small number the possibility of emigration, and after the opening of hostilities emigration was completely stopped, of course. Furthermore, the decision to leave was harder to make than in Germany or Austria. There the Jews were faced by a hostile majority of the population, but here they suffered together with their friendly neighbours and, together with them, hoped for an early collapse of the grotesque Protectorate. The Nazis seized all my permissions to emigrate—which was also a form of robbery—disclosing to me later that I would receive no exit paper because there was a danger that I would carry on hostile propaganda abroad.

So I lay with 999 comrades who shared my fate, on a not very clean mattress in the Fair Hall. The mood was not so bad as one might have expected. The last days, with the numberless worries, the constant fear of forgetting something important, and the many leave-takings, had been so irritating, and now we could at least doze a little, for there was nothing to do at the moment. Nevertheless there was a powerful physical shock—disgust at the horrible latrines, the almost total lack of washing facilities, and so on.

In the night of the third day we marched off. SS troops loaded their weapons in front of us and, guarded by them, we were driven to stand long hours by the train, where cattle cars awaited us. At the break of dawn the train started moving. We were greeted once again through the little barred apertures, by our beloved, wonderful homeland, the flower gardens, the places where we had taken so many walks, then the delightful Roztoky, with its quiet valley . . . one image after another sank out of sight. About ten o'clock we arrived. It was a bright summer day. Now it was time to march to Terezín. Be it said to the honour of the Czech police, who helped us so often, that they did not make us keep step and hold ranks; we walked in a long chain, a troop of bent refugees. But still many of us found the good fresh air and the inspired beauty of Central Bohemia's landscape a great comfort. Our trip in the open air did not last long and soon we were entering the massive gate of the former fortress. Our short glimpse of the outer world was over. The ghetto received us. If any of us had suspected then that our stay would last a full three years, we would have immediately collapsed as a result. But we all hoped for an early liberation.

The first impressions were so bad, so depressing, that almost everyone said to himself, release should come soon, or no one would survive. All ten plagues of old Egypt seemed to have been inflicted in exaggerated form on this abode of misery. An unimaginable plague of flies, a water shortage, a repulsive stink and the smell of corpses—that was our welcome. At the time an average of 130 people were dying daily. The food was deplorable, the bread mouldy. Since cooking utensils were lacking, huge lines formed before the distribution points at the so-called meal times; the nourishment was not enough to cover the effort to obtain it. We were housed in a barracks room on the ground floor that had served as store room, in narrow bunks, three above each other. A nail, or even a place to sit, was a precious possession, closely guarded from theft.

I do not want to describe further these conditions, but merely to state with admiration how the persevering, painstaking, responsible work gradually succeeded in making the situation bearable. The main hindrance lay in the maliciousness and stupidity of the Nazi supervisors. It is true they wanted to make Terezín a showplace for well-intentioned international commissions who were content with stage sets and did not look behind the scenes. But the Jews were interested in making the Potemkin villages into real improvements. I shall give two examples. The Nazis introduced ghetto currency, a nonsensical absurdity, for there was nothing to buy. In the best case one got something on a voucher. But in order to have currency circulation, the Nazis had to permit the establishment of some shops and to provide them with goods. In this way, one could, for example, buy a toothbrush that had been taken from a dead person and sterilized by boiling. But still this was progress, and from the beginning there was a secret plan to exchange the ghetto savings for real money after liberation, in order that the inmates might not be released with completely empty pockets. As a consequence of this understanding with the Soviet government, this humane plan was realized, which was a true blessing for thousands.

Now for the second example. The Nazis ordered a café to be set up, where neatly dressed waitresses, hair nicely done, would serve the tables. Again, what frivolity!

And yet: those who were no longer able to work could get a number—to prevent over-crowding—and sit there for two hours, enjoying the pleasure of resting in a comfortable chair. They sipped hot black water instead of coffee and leafed through yellowed illustrated papers. And this was also a consolation. In the evening the workers came and could raise their spirits with the cabaret performances.

I do not want, however, to continue this description of life in Terezín, for I have already done so in my book *Psychology of Life in the Concentration Camp Terezín* and in some articles for the bulletin of the Czechoslovak Jewish Religious Communities. I should only like to stress more—from the distance of more than one decade—the positive aspects of the Jewish leadership. As long as we were, so to say, in operation, one had fresh memories of the mistakes, shortcomings and mishaps in one's consciousness, things that we had to fight daily in the interest of the community. But at a greater distance one sees clearly what had been done unnoticed or against obstacles. Although there have been different individual treatments of this subject, there is no comprehensive general work that evaluates the medical care, the technical and chemical achievements, the internal government, and so on.

The praise becomes greater when one considers that far-reaching changes were made in the labour personnel, which made impossible any well-regulated continuity. No sooner was an undertaking going when it had to be improvised anew. Sickness and death made serious gaps. It would be no exaggeration to set the number of those falling ill at an average of twenty per cent. And no halfway reasonable person was guilty of malingering, for only by strenuous work could one get the slightest improvement in treatment, lodging and clothing. Moreover, any halfway decent person was repelled by the idea of letting others drudge for him, while he looked on idly. Besides, important work was the only, even though unreliable, protection against being shipped off in a transport.

And now we begin a very sad chapter—about the transports leaving Terezín. At any rate we fortunately knew nothing of the true meaning and purpose of the transports. Those who had been sent in transports wrote cards to us and it was only long afterwards that we learned that usually the permission to write was soon followed by the gas chambers. Once a labour transport even returned to Terezín and its members reported on the hard work they had had to do in Germany. How totally wrong our ideas were is best shown by the following: when the catastrophic October transports began in 1944 permission was given to relatives of those who had already been transported to sign up voluntarily. Many hundreds, particularly young women and girls, pushed forward in order to follow after their husbands or friends. I warned them emphatically, for I had no trust in the Nazis' endeavours to unite loved ones, and felt this was a means of getting a transport together without any trouble. But one of the Nazi leaders assured the beautiful wife of a member of the Elders' Council, who had been sent off in a transport, that by evening she would lie in the arms of her husband. As it came out later, the man in question had already been murdered and the young woman, full of life, was sent to her death.

The whole horrifying truth about these transports we found out only in the last few weeks of the war, when a new group of transports appeared: transports to Terezín. Those who had survived from the terrible death march came to us. One of the most distinguished doctors was beaten to death on the Litoměřice bridge when he

collapsed, completely worn out. Long train loads pulled sealed freight cars of gruesome contents: dead and still breathing bodies packed closely together. Despite my three years of experience in Terezín I did not think such physically and spiritually ruined human material could possibly exist. They looked like spectres.

But this apparition arose from a sadistic intent: the Nazis wanted thousands and thousands of dead. And they wanted to liquidate the inhabitants of Terezín. They no longer had time to send us to the gas chambers, although the chambers had already been built. But millions of infected lice came in with these survivor-transports. What we had always feared and had fought against with all available means of science, technique and organization, broke inexorably: a large, rapidly spreading typhus epidemic.

We found ourselves in this desperate situation at the time the triumphant Soviet Army freed us—in a dual sense, for they saved us from the last blows of the Nazis and with enormous energy and with powerful success they saved us with all feasible hygienic measures. Soon the epidemic was checked and soon thereafter fully suppressed.

Since my wife—as nurse in the infectious ward—did not want to leave her patients, and I was engaged in bringing more than a hundred thousand books to safety, we stayed almost three months more in the slowly disintegrating camp, and so we witnessed the last groups of transports—taking people home. Big buses—from Halle, Hamburg, etc.,—picked up their countrymen: long trains—decorated with flowers, branches and banners—steamed away to Hungary, Slovakia, Vienna, and elsewhere. The Praguites left in smaller groups. When we had finally finished our work and climbed into a truck, the camp was already quite empty.

Nearly ten years have passed. It makes one feel good to compare the dark past with a brighter present and, we hope, a still finer future. But, if this is to be, we must not forget what fascism and war mean.

What Else is There to Come?

BY KURT KAPPER

And we can hardly comprehend the place,
when pacing through the corridors for hours.
We cannot understand this world of ours.
We are suspended between time and space.

We see but stones, of trees there is no trace.
For while we gaze into the open doors,
our thoughts seem suddenly to stop their course
as if our lives were just a dreamy haze.

What else is there to come? Isn't this the end?
Who was it who condemned us to this spot?
We never knew such things exist as these.

We are afraid, we hardly dare to breathe.
A dream, and self-deception, is it not?
Our reason stops, we cannot understand.

(1943)

LEO HAAS

THE AFFAIR OF THE PAINTERS OF TEREZÍN



ON a June day in 1944 the painters and graphic artists, Bedřich Fritta, Otto Ungar, Felix Bloch and Leo Haas were called to the "Council of the Elders," to Mr. Zucker in the Magdeburg barracks, where the "Mayor's Office" of the Terezín ghetto was located. There he disclosed to us that we were to report the next morning to the commander of the SS. Mr. Zucker, who had certainly been sworn to secrecy, merely made the suggestion that we should pack warm underclothing and take a coat, for we might have to wait in the cold cellar of the commander's office, and "it might possibly last quite a while" before we were questioned—this was just a precaution, he said, so that we would come to no harm! Next morning we found there the architect Troller and an old man, Mr. Strass from Náchod, and I must say that the precautions of Mr. Zucker were justified. It really did last quite a while! For me and, if I am correctly informed, for Troller it lasted to the 9th and 22nd of May, 1945, and for the others all eternity.

What was it all about?

The Jewish leaders of the ghetto, who were responsible to the Gestapo for everything and could not take the least decision, except under the greatest danger, and with SS approval, had a sort of drafting office as part of the construction work in the ghetto, where some of the necessary technical drafting for building purposes was done. But it was also a place where artists from different countries (Dr. L. Heilbronn of Brno, the graphic artist Pöck from Vienna, Peter Kien, etc., in addition to those I mentioned above) were able to carry out all sorts of drawings and writing, necessary for bringing this phantom life to an end. For example, I remember that I myself drew a series of posters that were addressed to the smallest inmates of the ghetto, with the slogan, "Children, don't do that," trying to help in regard to rules of hygiene and general training of children. This team was headed by the splendid graphic artist Bedřich Fritta of Prague, who was at first protected from the transports as AK-man.(1)

Naturally, we were soon making use of this activity that was sanctioned by the SS (since we were employed by the "government") and which we exercised as part of our work, to actually make studies and sketches of life within the walls of the ghetto, camouflaged as official work. Especially Fritta and I myself were constantly encouraged to create this unique documentary testimony. The members of different cells would use the traditional Czech saying, "Write this down, Kisch!" Well, this encouragement was not necessary. Even before this I had not been idle when, after my arrest in Ostrava, I had been working in the construction of the first European camp for Jews (in 1939-1940) in Nisko on the San. I had brought from there a thick folder of documentary sketches made in a similar way. I was driven all the more by the shocking experiences within the ghetto walls, to be constantly on the look-out, wherever I could, sketch pad in hand.

Of course we were often in danger and had to use the greatest caution in drawing, hiding from the SS men that were spread out all over the town, keeping to attics or somewhere in a crowd. Fritta, Ungar, and often Bloch and I were so oppressed by the horrible surroundings that we devoted ourselves to our "office duties" in the day

(1) Aufbaukommando (work group that exempted its members from inclusion in transports).

and then night after night gathered in our darkened workroom, where our sketches matured as a cycle. At that time and under these conditions (perhaps it is only today that I realize what great danger we were then working under) the cycle of 150 splendid drawings by "Fritzek" (Fritta), for instance, came into being. Today they hang in the Jewish Museum in Prague. This was also how I made my cycle of drawings of Terezín some of which are in the possession of the Czechoslovak government, but a large number of which were sent on an information tour of the United States, others are among my property and still others serve as basis for subsequent works and thus help in some attempts to depict Terezín life. At that time we came in contact with the above-mentioned Mr. Strass, a businessman in Nachod, whose "Aryan" family kept up underground connections with him. He told us that this contact was made through some courageous members of the Czech gendarmerie, who served in the ghetto and helped all they could. I myself came in contact with two brothers—I think their name was Přikryl. Strass, who was a passionate collector, especially of Czech art, often begged drawings from us that then were sent out of the ghetto by the same route that food and tobacco came in. We thought that in this way something of our documentary material would survive, even if we did not. Then we learned that successful contacts had been made with foreign countries and that our works had been sent beyond the borders of the territories ruled by the Nazis. In our enthusiasm we undoubtedly underestimated the danger that had thereby increased, and we worked even more passionately and intensively on our presentation of the ever more dismal "life" in the ghetto.

Things went on like this for a full two years. Then—I think it was in the spring of 1944—the visit of an especially important Red Cross commission from Switzerland was announced, I believe I forgot to say that we had been told that our drawings had gone to Switzerland. For conspiratorial reasons we could not—consciously—meet with our colleagues. The preparations for this commission's visit, on which the Nazis seemed to place great value, in the precarious situation they were already in by that time, we also sketched.

Then the visit of the Red Cross was over. Among the initiate it was rumoured that the SS leaders were dissatisfied with it—dissatisfied and suspicious. Evidently the representatives of the Red Cross were not content with the streets that had been polished clean with Jewish persons' toothbrushes, and wanted a look behind the scenes of the Potemkin village. They seemed to have been well informed. There has been no success in tracing their contacts, but the fact is that a few weeks after the visit came the orders from Mr. Zucker with his troubled warning, which introduced this report.

I do not know to what circumstances it is due that the SS made no raid on our rooms, I think it was to show their mastery of the situation, and to avoid any irritating surprise. Our employment in the "government" gave us the only privilege, but one that was not to be discounted, that we were lodged in barrack rooms divided off by lath walls and so aroused the illusion that we were living in our own homes. When things had gone on in this way for a half year, we succeeded in saving a large part of the rest of our work. With feverish efforts, and with the help of a building expert, engineer Beck of Náchod, we succeeded in prying out a part of the wall in our room and to wall in the drawings. In a few hours it was finished, but I did not

forget to leave some unimportant drawings lying about, so that if there was a house search by the Gestapo, I could stop the mouths of the wolves to some extent. Fritta's works were also buried by friends in a tin case in a farm yard, and were saved in this way.

After a short discussion with each other, when we had heard Zucker's report, we naturally decided that our activity as "documentarians" was the basis for our questioning, and this was shown to be quite correct.

We reported on the morning of—I think—June 17, 1944— there is an assignment card to the police headquarters in the card-file of the Jewish Religious Communities offiice in Prague— at the office of the Gestapo head and were immediately herded down to the cellar.

After a long wait, we were hustled up to Rahm's room. Besides Rahm there were present: Moes, also known as the "bird of death," also Günther whom I recognized immediately from my time at Nisko, for there he had headed the organization of the transports, together with his brother in Ostrava. But then still another person came in, whom I again recognized from his inspection trips to Nisko: he was Eichmann. I knew, of course, that this meant no good for us.

I am trying to make as dispassionate as possible a portrayal of the "Affair of the Painters from Terezín," as I found, after our return in 1945, our case was called. And here also I cannot speak of any brutalities. Eichmann, in opening the questioning, gave the impression rather of one who was deeply hurt that his noble intentions for the Jews could be so slanderously interpreted. And it was in this sense and this tone that he spoke. Then the questioning was continued by Günther and Rahm. Both followed Eichmann in using an oily smooth, soft tone, and carried on a sort of discussion on the history of art with us. Naturally the undertones sounded that much more dangerous. They had from two to three drawings from each one of us four painters as evidence. Each of us was in a different SS-man's charge. Günther questioned me—that I remember precisely—showing me a study of Jews searching for potato peels and saying, "How could you think up such mockery of reality and draw it?" I immediately used the same tone and explained to him that it was not, as he thought, something I had invented, but a simple study from nature, such as any proper artist is accustomed to make, a sketch of what I had happened to see by chance when I was on official duties, and which I had immediately sketched, in the same way as any painter seeks for objects to paint.

Then came the question: "Do you really think there is hunger in the ghetto, when the Red Cross did not find any at all?" The subsequent questions were aimed at making us name the people who had been our contacts with the outside world and tell whether we thought they formed a Communist cell. Since we denied this and shifted everything onto our artistic interest, the questioning was interrupted and we were taken again to the cellar. I do not know how long we lay there. After some hours, Günther and Moes appeared again, and this time the latter had a long pistol in his hand. Their tone was much more like the familiar Gestapo manner, and now their sole aim was to find out our connection with some Communist cell. We could go home immediately if we would tell all the names of those who had "led" us into this activity. Then Moes, after brandishing the revolver in a terrible way, broke off the questioning and said in a German that still rings in my ears, "Just stop it!

You'll get nothing out of these fellows." (It is certainly very interesting from a psychological point of view that one often retains some not very essential fragment of conversation from situations that could be a matter of life and death.) Now we were left alone and felt we'd never get home again.

It had already got dark in the cellar when we heard a heavy truck pull up in the early evening. Soon thereafter came the typical bawling of the SS guards as they clattered into the cellar and drove us with the butts of their guns and with blows up the stairs and onto a place densely covered with trucks, in which were our wives and children, crying and yet happy to see us again. There was Fritta's wife and three-year-old boy Thomas, Mrs. Bloch, Mrs. Ungar with her five-year-old daughter, my wife Erna, then the aged František Strass from Náchod and the architect Troller who was sent away with us. As architect he had had to carry out the special demands of the camp command and in some way had not suited the gentlemen.

The whole transport went to the Small Fortress that was situated in the vicinity. There we first had to stand with our faces to the wall, the children as well. Then we men were put in one cell and the women and the two children in another, but not in the women's court.

I do not want to recount here the suffering we had to endure. This is impossible for lack of space. I believe that Ungar was the first to be sent from the Small Fortress, and I think Bloch was beaten to death on the spot, then Troller went to Auschwitz also, and I heard that he survived this, but lives somewhere overseas. The aged Strass also held out for a while in Auschwitz, I believe, and there he and his wife perished. Mrs. Ungar and her daughter survived the horror (in Auschwitz, too, I believe), while Otto Ungar died of typhus, in Buchenwald after liberation, I believe. There remained in the Fortress Fritta and I, our wives and little Thomas Fritta.

In the course of our daily labour at the "Richard" works in Litoměřice I was so beaten that as a result I had a serious phlegmon, among other things, that was cut out by our cell policeman, Dr. Pavel Wurzel, with the assistance of Julius Taussig (a furrier from Teplice), who could not go to work there because of a broken leg—without sterilization, without anesthetic, with a rusty saw. We from the "Eastern nations" were not allowed access to the sick bay or to be visited when ill. While I was going through the crisis of the wound's healing I lay hidden in old rags, where our yard commander Oberscharführer Rojko found me and drove me with blows into the bunker cell and forbade anyone to give me food. I was there about a month, then more and more fellow prisoners were brought in, among them the severely ill Fritta who had dysentery. I had been saved by the solidarity of my fellow prisoners (Jewish and non-Jewish), above all our yard trusty, the Czech General Melichar. Then, before the whispered rumours of our liquidation by Pindja and Rojko came true, we two received an indictment from the Prague Gestapo, that spoke ambiguously of "Horror propaganda and its dissemination abroad," together with a warrant for our arrest that we were to sign voluntarily, "for fear of the just anger of the German people," and which bore the remark that was familiar to us: "R.u." (return not desired).

The very next day (it was towards the end of August) we rode in cell cars attached to an express train, with a stop in Dresden for questioning, then through what was



53 Moving (Otto Ungar)

then called Breslau to Auschwitz. Fritta was very feeble and was scarcely able to move, but had to be taken to the toilet, because of the dysentery, every quarter hour. I offered to care for him and thus my handcuffs were temporarily removed. For instance, I carried him, almost on my back—he was a good head taller than I—in Dresden, through half the city to the police headquarters. In Auschwitz, where we were taken to the so-called stone Camp Auschwitz I, as political prisoners (not for racial reasons, what a nuance!), the prisoners' organization was already functioning. Fritta was taken directly to the sick bay by the architect Hanuš Major and Dr. Pavel Wurzel, who had become doctor for the sick bay in the meantime. I visited Fritta there a few times in the next eight days. He had almost completely lost consciousness and on the eighth day he died, a horrible spectacle of decay, covered all over with oedema, with complete decomposition of the blood (sepsis).

I went on to Sachsenhausen in a Sonderkommando of the Reichssicherheitshauptamt. Together with Czech pals like Adolf Burger, Stein-Skala, Karel Gottlieb, Dr. Kaufmann-Hořice, and with the well-known Berlin publicist Peter Edel, I followed all the movements of this Himmelfahrt (heaven-bound) command up to liberation in May 1945, in Ebensee, Austria.

Meanwhile my wife Erna, although her health was completely undermined, remained among the living and returned home. She had spent the year with little Thomas Fritta in solitary confinement in the Fourth Yard of the Small Fortress, where Fritta's wife Hansi had died, miserably ill. We later adopted Thomas.

In 1955, my wife Erna died, after having barely existed for ten years, one hundred per cent disabled after her imprisonment.

Immediately after we had returned we sought out the places in Terezín where we had hidden our works. We actually found them again, unharmed. Later I was able to show these (they were published in almost all centres of publication throughout the world), with the splendid drawings by Fritta and some by Ungar, as well as some strongly incriminating drawings by a Terezín doctor, Dr. Fleischmann, who had managed to save his, too. Added to other evidence, this was strong testimony on the "final solution" engineered by Eichmann and Globke.

I feel it my duty to accuse, until the end of my life, the fascist murderers named in my report, and to accuse the men in the background—in the name of all the victims, in my own name, and above all in the name of my friends who did not return, the painters of Terezín.

Thirty-Word Letter from Theresienstadt

BY DR. JINDŘICH FLUSSER

The month has thirty days,
thirty words this letter.
What it says?
It's only this:
Each of the thirty is
to bring my love to you,
and a thousand kisses, too.

(1942)

CHAPTER VI

THE GHETTO PARADISE – A BIG FRAUD

THE BANK OF THE JEWISH SELF-GOVERNMENT

ADMINISTRATION IN TEREZÍN / Dr. Ludwig Hift

THE GHETTO CENTRAL LIBRARY AT TEREZÍN

(THE FÜHRER PRESENTS THE JEWS WITH A CITY)

Käthe Starke-Goldschmidt

A FILM ABOUT TEREZÍN / Hans Hofer

TEREZÍN — A MASK FOR AUSCHWITZ / Erich Kulka

Who has heard such a thing?

Who has seen such things? Isaiah 66 : 8

Dr. LUDWIG HIFT, Vienna

THE BANK OF THE JEWISH SELF-GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION IN TEREZÍN

Editor's note: the author was an official in the Central European Länderbank in Vienna, engaged chiefly in accounting and organization. In view of this experience, he was charged, shortly after his arrival in Terezín in October 1942 (transport No. IV/12-269), with the task of drawing up a plan of organization for the "Bank of the Jewish Self-Government Administration." His work with this propaganda "bank," that was set up by the Nazis to serve their purposes, lasted until it was liquidated in August 1945.

A curiosity unique in history was the Bank of the Jewish Self-Government Administration in the concentration camp "Terezín ghetto." In order to deceive the foreign press representatives and the International Red Cross Commission, and to show that the Jews were allowed to carry on their own cultural and economic life in their "reservation," the SS camp command informed the Jewish Council of Elders in August 1942 that a bank was to be set up, that it was to issue its own camp currency under the statutes that had been drawn up, that it was to check on the circulation of bank notes and see to it that money was obtained for it. Every inmate was to be furnished with valid currency, acording to tables that would be worked out, in five categories for the drafts that could be issued, from members of the Council of Elders down to the aged unemployed "charges." Exactly double the amount of the monthly draft was to be credited to a blocked savings account, without exception (modeled after the "iron savings" system); every inmate of the camp was obliged to have his savings book on him, in order to be able to give information immediately, if questioned by a high official from Berlin, or by a member of a commission from abroad, concerning the amount he had saved. Furthermore, the camp commander agreed to the employment of twenty mechanical bookkeeping systems to cope with this huge bank apparatus, with its more than 50,000 personal accounts and the same number of monthly postings and also separate entries in the savings books by hand. The request for fifty to sixty employees for the whole bank apparatus, including the heavy currency circulation, was granted as well.

By early 1943, things had advanced far enough that the plan of organization had been ratified, shops were set up with high-sounding signboards, such as "Gentlemen's Clothing," "Ladies' Clothing," and so on, where one could henceforth acquire the best quality requisitioned clothing for camp currency, instead of, as hitherto, gratis at a distribution point. A "coffee house" was also opened, where black bilgewater could be had by paying a few crowns; from now on showers were given only on the basis of cards showing payment had been made; entrance cards were also issued for a fee, giving admittance to the establishments that had been set up for appearance's sake, the "leisure-time cultural activities" that were to deceive the outer world.

In March 1943, the mechanical bookkeeping systems arrived from Brno, together with the account cards, from Bohušovice the savings books, and in April heavy boxes with the banknotes that had been copied partly from the Łodz camp currency (with a head of Moses), partly according to designs from the technical department of the Jewish Self-Government, and had been printed by the Prague National Bank mint. There was a total of 53,000,000 nominal camp currency, printed in terms of crowns in denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, and 100-crown pieces. The head of the Bank was Dr. Desider Friedmann, known throughout the Jewish world as a Zionist official and the last President of the Vienna Religious Community. He was chosen to document before the whole world that what had gone on in Terezín was meant seriously. The actual management was in the hands of Dr. Stefan Popper (former board member of the Bohemian Discount Bank and Credit Institution of Prague), whose assistant I was from the beginning, Mr. Karel Waigner (former director of the Legiobank in Prague), and Dr. Ludwig Waller (former syndic of the Deutsche Bank, Berlin).

So the newly established "Bank" opened for business in the relatively suitable rooms in the old town hall in Terezín on May 12, 1943.

Because of the uniformity of the measures taken, the organization was quite simple and made possible the most rapid counting out of money and deposits in the blocked accounts and the savings accounts also. On every account book, note was made of the monthly deposits. Changes such as shifting "charges" into the manpower pool (in the case of young people) or vice versa (in case of illness) were made through notices from the wage offices or by the "Blockältester." In this way the amount in the account of all inmates of the camp could be determined in the first few days of the month, by means of the mechanical bookkeeping, whereupon the payment of currency and entries in the savings books began. According to a set procedure, the savings books were collected by the wage offices or the Blockälteste and delivered to the Bank. After a few days, during which time the amounts to be paid out were checked and the savings books brought up to date, the money and the savings books were picked up and distributed to the individual inmates. The payment of cash was not entered through bookkeeping in the account. Only a notation in the account book told that the corresponding cash amount had been paid out in the month in question. The amount of cash issued varied from 50 to 150 crowns a month, while the credits on the blocked accounts were from 50 to 400 crowns in the same space of time. Besides these payments and the credits on the blocked accounts, organized under the system of "permanent charges," there were also "free deposits" in a special part of the same account and savings books, and in a definite ratio also credit arrangements for larger purchases in the shops, with monthly payments deducted from the next six cash payments.

A special chapter was the conveyance of money drafts to the camp command in favour of the inmates. They could be sent from outside and contributed substantially to the establishment of the Terezín Bank. These drafts that were noted by the camp command were never once paid out in valid camp currency, but always credited to the blocked account, *although the recipient had to confirm* by signing personally (as long as he was alive and in the camp) *that he had got the money.*

The balance for the month had to be presented to the camp command, with abundant statistical material, by the 4th of the following month. It was then forwarded to Berlin and Prague. Several times there was also an inspection tour by a Berlin auditor with jurisdiction to check on the organization and the correctness of the figures of the balance-sheets that had been presented, the circulation of bank notes and the per capita quotas. Circulation went up to a high point of 18,000,000 crowns, approximately, and when the population was most sparse in 1945, sank to about 7,000,000 crowns. The Bank's returns consisted not only of the "receipts" from the shops, the coffee house, the leisure-time activities and the bath house, but also *from the fact that everyone who was shipped off in a transport had to hand in his cash on hand with his savings book to the Bank.* Because taking camp currency out of the camp was strictly forbidden under pain of severe punishment, the labour groups that were employed outside the camp (on building roads and railway spurs), for instance, were searched for money before they left camp. But, since those who left in transports did not surrender their cash in many cases, giving it instead to friends and relatives they left behind, the per capita quota rose to about 700 crowns in the end.

One can hardly speak of purchasing power of this currency within the camp, after what we have said above.

The Bank was not taken seriously by the involuntary inhabitants of the ghetto, and was rightly regarded as a joke and eye wash. It was supposed to serve as shabby argument for the SS before foreign countries, in case they needed vindication for their treatment of Jews. And some of the individual defendants in the Nurnberg War Criminals Trial actually did present Terezín, with its institutions, as evidence in their defence. This "playing at banking" went so far that a seven-member board of management had to be set up, with the President of the Vereinigte Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft, Vienna, Ernst Egger, the former leading business man, Director of the Lower Austrian Discount Bank, Felix Stransky (Feichenfeld Jr. went to Auschwitz) and the former mayor of Le Havre and the former French Minister of Trade among the members.

What a "Potemkin Village" Terezín was, can best be seen from the fact that before every visit of an international commission there was a week-long "beautifying campaign," signboards as wide as the houses were nailed up, facades were plastered on, and for a few days dining rooms were opened.

In all these commission visits the Bank played a great role, for the first place in the sightseeing tour was this institution. The head of the bank had to deliver a previously prepared speech on the significance of the Bank in the economic life in the camp, on currency circulation, on sources of receipts and backing of currency. On this point he was ordered to explain that from an evacuation fund established in Prague for Bohemia and Moravia, serving to maintain Terezín, an equal sum was set apart after the camp currency had been printed and this was put aside as reserve to back the currency.

In the summer of 1944 a propaganda film was made in Terezín, under the forced direction of Kurt Gerron (formerly director for UFA films). For this, several scenes were shot, showing savings book holders standing before the window in the bank, and with close-ups of money raining down in the form of swirling camp bank-notes.

After every such commission visit and after the sound film was made, transports were shipped off to Auschwitz on a larger scale, followed by a filling of the camp by newcomers until there was another visit. Each dispatching of a transport brought special work for the bank: crediting the cash handed in to the free account, taking up the account books of all members of the transport, and ascertaining the free and blocked credits. While these were temporarily left in the books and were not seized separately, this was fundamentally changed at the point when the war was evidently considered lost. In February 1945, the collected file cards (free credits and blocked accounts) and all other written records of those who had died or had been shipped away, had to be handed in to the camp commander with the false date December 31st, 1944. The continuous fire, lasting for days, showed that all this material, so important for the future, was being completely destroyed. The demand that these records be handed in, without leaving anything behind, was of course made at pistol point. In the process the free and the blocked credits of those sent off in transports had also to be written off, so that the level of savings deposits sank from over 100,000,000 crowns to less than 20,000,000.

This was the situation when at the end of April the International Red Cross took charge of the ghetto. Only old people were left in the camp; the head of the Bank, Dr. Friedmann, as well as the above-mentioned Dr. Popper and Dr. Waller, had been sent off to Auschwitz in October 1944, never to return. The agitation of the inmates in regard to their uncertain fate in the last days and hours, had been somewhat allayed when the Red Cross took charge, so that actually the handing over of the Bank on May 9th, when members of the Soviet Army liberated the camp, could be considered as already done. Still, the examination of bank records, that has not been possible until now, shows that the "Evacuation Fund for Bohemia and Moravia," formed from requisitioned Jewish property made it possible for immediate payment of the blocked 20,000,000 crowns in genuine Czechoslovak crowns, without any more to do about it. The Bank heads had the duty of coming to an agreement with the Czechoslovak authorities in regard to paying out 75 per cent of the blocked credits, with the remaining 25 per cent to be used for the former Terezín camp inmates who were fortunate enough to escape the hell of Auschwitz and other Nazi concentration camps, giving them the collected savings, even though no records were at hand. The few hundred persons who in the period from the middle of May to the middle of August 1945 had the luck to report as returned camp inmates, could, after identification, receive a sum between 1,000 and 5,000 crowns, as did those who remained in the camp, too. This freed them from the initial material worries. These payments, the most gratifying that had ever been made in the two years the Bank had been in operation, were issued by the self-sacrificing cooperation of a few bank officials who worked when all the others were already enjoying the regained freedom in their former homeland—with the proud feeling that they could really be of help.

Terezín was truly the very essence of Nazi lying and cheating, of fraud and eye wash—and the Bank of the Jewish Self-Government Administration was one of several means for this. But, thanks to the spirit of cooperation that reigned in the camp at Terezín, the Bank became at the end, after the Nazis were out, a means for great assistance.

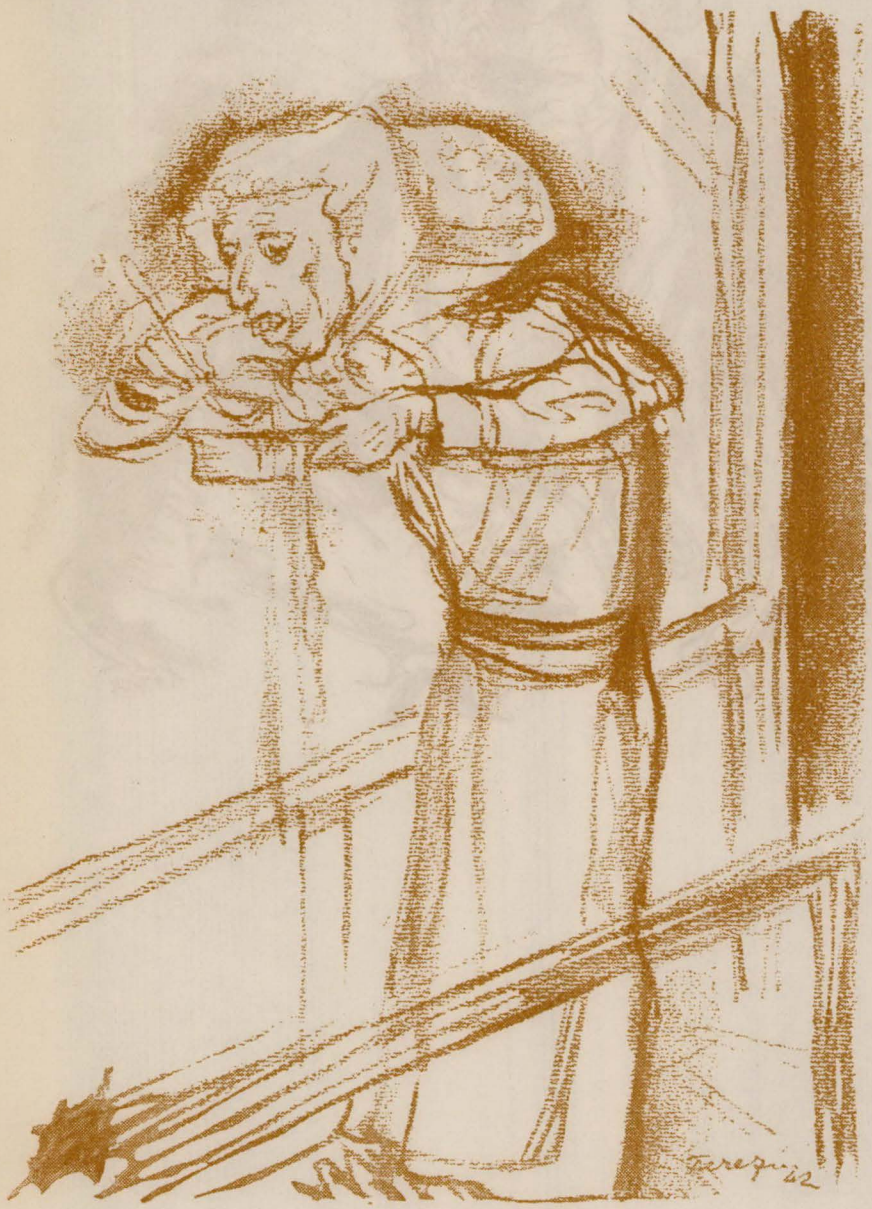


KÄTHE STARKE-GOLDSCHMIDT

THE GHETTO CENTRAL LIBRARY AT TEREZÍN

A chapter from the book

THE FÜHRER PRESENTS THE JEWS WITH A CITY



AS with other institutions of the camp which were under the autonomous administration of the Jews, organization and operation of the library were excellent. Small wonder, considering that those in charge were top-ranking industrialists and economists, technicians and scientists. Men, who while free had been accustomed from their leading positions to influence events in their special fields, now perforce devoted themselves to this trifle. When the library was being planned, the number of books was estimated at 4,000, mainly consisting of volumes brought from the Rabbinical Seminary of Berlin and parts of the Warburg Library of Hamburg. A year later the number of books had increased to nearly 49,000 and now comprised also classic and modern languages, philosophical works, works on Jewish history or natural sciences, some classics and many cook books. Purely literary writings were indicated as numbering 3,500, and consisted of such works as *The Struggle for Rome* and *The Cheops Pyramid,* the *Last Days of Pompei,* to mention only the most interesting and modern ones among them.

The beginnings of the library are shown in "The Report on Activities," rendered, with the scrupulous exactitude of a businessman, by Mr. Hugo Friedmann of Vienna, one year after the founding of the library. At the time Hugo Friedmann was substituting for Else Menken, who had come from Hamburg in July 1942, as a librarian with Aby Warburg's books, and had already been promoted to Chief Librarian for Professor Mela Riesenfeld. Friedmann was soon to take her place, for she was suffering from oedema and enteritis, the symptoms of starvation, and when I paid my first visit to her in the sickroom of the Hamburg barracks, she was already nearing the end, so that my first visit was also my last.

Friedmann's report starts with a "Note for the file representing, as it were, the foundation-charter of the G.C.L". I want to quote some extracts from it, because of the clarity with which the functioning and the possibilities of such a unique library were set out therein for its entire duration, but also because of the cautious, periphrastic style which so uncannily shows the forced situation prevailing at the time. With the file code Ing. Z./L., Ing. Otto Zucker of Prague dictated to his secretary, Mrs. Lindova, on 29th October 1942:

"NOTE

concerning the establishment of a lending library and a reading room.

Re: Order of Camp Commander SS-Obersturmführer Dr. Seidl.

I. Inventory of Books:

"At the present time the ghetto has available a relatively small number of books.

a) Part of the books available for a lending library derive from the common property of former transports, they are being collected, put in order and catalogued. A list of these books will be handed to the Camp Commander's Headquarters for examination.

b) Another part are derived from books requisitioned in the course of luggage control of arriving transports. You are requested to hand such books to the Senior Council, so that they, too, may be put in order and catalogued.

"However, the stock of books could be considerably increased and improved if the books from the apartments of the evacuated Jews, after inspection and elimination, were put at the disposal of the Ghetto Theresienstadt.

"The books presently available include light reading as well as more serious subjects, instructive material, etc., and probably do not exceed a total of 4,000 volumes, in so far as the books mentioned under a) and b) are concerned. Therefore, supplementation and enlargement of the stock is urgently required.

"The only books to be circulated are those which shall have been released by the Camp Commander's office after an examination of the lists."

Ad II (location of the library) it is stated that a book shop will be installed in house L 304. Account was taken of the fact that this shop, as well as the books available, were insufficient to meet the requirement of 40,000 people. However, the scarcity of room in the ghetto precluded any other accommodation for the time being. Therefore, a solution had to be found to overcome this difficulty.

For the first problem the solution was found in the brilliant idea of having travelling libraries. For the second problem—too few readable books for too many would-be readers—there was no solution.

On November 17, 1942, the library was opened opposite the entrance of the "Hamburg" barracks. Its manager, right from the start up to the liquidation in July 1945, was Dr. Emil Utitz associate professor of philosophy and psychology of Prague University.

The circulation library units were to be distributed in parcels of 30 books to the individual blocks or dwelling units and circulated according to a definite plan. The method proved sound and was generally adhered to, although the parcels, even when the books were exchanged, could not offer much variety. Each of them contained a cross section of the works of which most copies were available. This led perforce to a realization of the educational aims of Friedmann, that the people who had hitherto shown little interest in Jewish subjects, should be made more familiar with them.—This may count as a positive factor, but the circulating of the books also had a very negative effect. They passed from one dirty hand to another without disinfection. This was not the least cause of the spread of skin diseases, jaundice, scarlet fever, lung and intestinal diseases. The sickness rate among the library staff was higher than average. Only half their number, or less, were working during any one period.

Many books were lost. It would have been futile to search for them. And who would have had the energy to do so? The control system that was provided—each parcel was to contain a list of its contents which was to be checked by the senior member of the block at the time the books were returned—could not be carried out, owing to the fluctuation of the "population." Outgoing transports carried books with them. This was tolerated by Professor Utitz who said a book was serving its purpose as long as it was read, whatever the circumstances. He did not know as yet that these books would not be read. "To get each book to the point where it can have its best effect" was a principle of the library, which was adhered to. Five thousand prayer books were issued to those interested in them. The youth hostels had an ardent spokesman in the person of Walter Popik and were provided for, to the best of possibilities; only their urgent requests for Czech reading matter

could not be met. For the sickrooms there was spoilage, and we had branch offices with such high-sounding names as Central Medical Library, Technical Library and a Hebrew Library for young people.

All these had been created to relieve the small shop. But how could we reduce the flood of visitors streaming into the library?

According to the Regulations of the lending library, each individual borrower had to (1) pay a deposit of 50.-Gh. Kr., i.e., fifty Ghetto-Kronen, and (2) have a certificate of his studies. The ghetto money was another one of those games instituted by the commanders, which had the one advantage that the bank established for the circulation of this currency offered to some specialists a relatively pleasant job for a period of time. However, since nobody could do anything with the jewel-backed currency, jokingly so called because it bore the signature of the "Juden Ältester of Theresienstadt", Jacob Edelstein (Edelstein is German for a jewel), the possibility of using it profitably for a "subscription" in the library, was attractive rather than otherwise. Nor was the second condition a very effective one. In view of the high percentage of university men in the camp, there was hardly any doubt as to their qualification, and a major part of the other inmates possessed a standard of education which equally entitled them to use the library. It was the task of Professor Utitz and his librarian to test them.

When, after nine months with the cleaning gang, I sat down for the first time in front of the lending library index, everything was already running smoothly. The odd collection of books was stacked on wooden shelves covering the walls of the shops from floor to ceiling and shelves placed transversely which formed another three rows. The sketch by the Viennese painter Alfred Bergel gives a very good idea of the flimsy crate appearance of the place in which the dusty atmosphere of an antiquarian shop prevailed. For artistic reasons he turned round the working table of his friend Hugo Friedmann. In actual fact, when sitting at his table Hugo Friedmann had his back to the lending library, with inkstand and books set against the wall. This was the wall separating the library from the adjoining room, where Hugo Slonitz had charge of thousands of Hebrew books. A picture of this room had to be painted by the Prague painter Otto Ungar by order of the Dienststelle. It has remained for us, because "Herr" Rahm found fault with it: "No-o", he said in his Bavarian idiom, "it says 'Silence' here— and then the lamp is not hanging straight, I don't want this." And so he returned it to Ungar, who passed it on to Friedmann.

The reading room had been in use since June 1943. It was supervised in turns by Claire Müller—who had just been married in the ghetto to Dr. Pless—and Juliane Mansbacher. They handed out to the readers the works of the permanent library and worked on the catalogue. Also Slonitz and his assistants in the Hebrew Room were busy setting up a catalogue. These catalogues, of which mention has already been made in the "foundation-charter," were probably requested by the Dienststelle. Prof. Utitz made good use of them for the purpose of saving many people from harder work, or even from transport. Of course, in the autumn of 1944 no further protection was possible. Young and old departed, even all the inmates of the Altmann House who, under the protection of Murmelstein and by order of the Dienststelle and on special food, had also been engaged in the compilation of a Hebrew catalogue.

But we did not know anything about this as yet. We were still in March 1944. Before us lay the summer of "the beautifying campaign" and the autumn transports. But we did not know about either the one or the other. As yet, small, beak-faced Dr. Käthe Joachimsohn gave her orders, and Kurti Streim, the apprentice, carried piles of books about and made parcels for the blocks.

Twice a day the boss looked in, Professor Utitz was a model for a university teacher being a philosopher, not only in the chairs but also in practice and under irritating circumstances. He seemed unaffected by all mishaps, though he had experienced a great many of them. He had surely lost much weight during the twenty-one months he had been in the camp, but nevertheless he had the appearance of contented rotundity. He had a particular non-committal and easy way of spreading his words of greeting on entering the room over all those present, so that no one could feel to have been addressed individually, but no one, on the other hand, could feel ignored. When he retired to his room after going the rounds, he left behind him a breath of encouragement and optimism. His room was situated toward the courtyard and equipped with shelves full of dark books. Its scanty, old-fashioned furniture gave it the character of a study in Theodor Storm's time, and although the writing-desk, the small book-case and the chair were much dilapidated and neglected, this small study bore the mark of exclusiveness. With all the informality prevailing at Theresienstadt, it would have been unthinkable to burst in on Professor Utitz without having been annouced. Nor, to my knowledge, did anyone ever enter his room uninvited, so strong was his natural authority. On the other hand, it was also a natural characteristic of the members of the library—we should add today—to be well-behaved.

In such relatively pleasant surroundings, aside from the dust, the fleas and the cold, it should have been possible for some sort of modest, suburban cosiness to develop, had this not been strictly against the principles of the German camp commanders. Unrest and threats were to prevail always. Moreover, we of L 304 were never safe from an SS raid. The reason for this was that in the top storey of the house there were the painters, and the painters' studio was a "German undertaking." That is to say, it was not under autonomous administration but the administration of the camp commanders. The things the painters had to do as regards the forging of foreign banknotes we were only told about in whispers, after they had all been deported.

While we were still living in the lower part of the house, the "Herren" were wont to ask for all sorts of private matters. Thus, one day, Alfred Bergel insisted that I simply h a d to tell him the colours of Leibl's Three Women at Church; he had to make a copy of it, but did not have the colour scheme. After all, the painting was at the Kunsthalle in Hamburg, so I had to know. In order to supervise the progress of the work, the SS people frequently came to the house and you never knew whether they would pass through the stairway and Slonitz' room and suddenly appear in the shop to spread terror for some moments. We never had a very clear conscience, and this was also connected with the painters, amongst other things.

Between the library, nearly always represented by Hugo Friedmann, and the painters, there existed good-neighbourly relation on a sound, material basis. The library possessed large folders containing sketches and architects' drawings of Berlin

buildings at the time of the founders. At that time the Berliners had used a high-quality sort of cardboard, the reverse side of which was not printed over and proved ideal for various painting techniques. In the course of exchanges a sheet was returned now and then to the library on which the artist had worked off his impressions, and which could be better concealed among the books than anywhere else. When Folder No. 1 was empty, Hugo Friedmann, with the knowledge of Professor Utitz, started to replenish it with the sketches the collection of which we tell about here.

Spring came. In May 1944, the library suddenly had to be moved. To L 514, a former public tavern with adjoining rooms and a cinema hall. In the meantime the stock had increased to 65,000 volumes which had to be packed in cases and moved on flat, hand-drawn carts. There were enough helping hands. Young people harnessed themselves to the carriage in groups of four, two went alongside and four behind it. In this way the cart was drawn and pushed and its contents simply tipped out at the new place, and so back they went with the empty cases. Again packing and carting—and so it went on innumerable times. It was hard work, at great speed, they had little strength and the way was long. From the "Hannover" to the gate of the "Dresden" barracks, the longest distance possible within the camp, about one kilometre.

In three days and three nights the work was completed, and I remember them as bright days; the only bright days—and the ensuing darkness was to be the blacker for it. During the removal the weather was fine, the young men's enthusiasm over being so near the books, even though only to help moving them, was so gratifying. I can still hear them shouting when they set the carts into motion "Jdeme"—which means "Let's go."

Many of these helpers went away in the transports this same month of May before the beautifying campaign. Among them was Käthe Joachimsohn.

For the new rooms, from which old and sick people had been precipitately moved, we received modern, bug-proof metal book-racks, no higher than the arm can reach. It was almost a pleasure to arrange the sections from the librarian's point of view. Thanks to Hitler's lootings in Europe, we now had some 120,000 volumes. A reading room was created by the erection of beaver-board partitions and connected with the lending library by a sliding window. In this way, several connecting rooms were provided and Alfred Bergel walked about in them in search of the right spot from which to view and to sketch the multitude of perspectives into one single picture. He was relieved of this worry. Before he had made up his mind, the autumn transports were upon us and the very first one removed both Friedmann and Bergel. But before that happened, the library was filmed and thus preserved for posterity. The way it looked in the early summer of 1944, it really was quite presentable, but what for? This question was soon answered: an international commission wanted to inspect Theresienstadt and had announced its visit in enough time to be given an appropriate reception.

After the liberation and still under the impression of what I had lived through, I wrote to Alfred Kerr in England, among other things, about the library:

"For the majority of the inmates it was a barren facility and its 65,000 volumes . . . only rarely left their shelves. Our customers were old scholarly men and women,

some of them of high rank and reputation. They came in dragging their swollen feet, their noses dripping, to fetch the sweet drug of learning and take it back with them into their noisy and filthy cave dwellings. Those with simpler tastes enjoyed Jewish family magazines, annual sets bound in black calico, or enriched their knowledge of Jewish history through innumerable volumes of Dubnow and Graetz. When the books were returned, there were pages missing, hastily torn out while intent on reading, for an urgent purpose.

"Purely literary works were scarce and strictly sifted by the index. One author appeared to have slipped through: I discovered the work during my first reconnaissance tour, while standing on top of the big ladder: Reunion with AlfredKerr. — Half emotion, half aggression: Well, how are things with you today? Does it hold firm, what you wrote, what we believed in once—what has remained of it n o w?— The world in the drama—once it was our world, too. The world of deceptive appearances—it is no more. So much treasure of the mind, so much ingenuousness of the word—squandered for—nothing. Did it ever exist? Where are the traces? Gone with the wind, scattered, forgotten.

"Up there, right under the dusky ceiling of the library, prepared at any moment to hide the prohibited book, I read: 'They have survived all the pyres . . . unkillable . . . and press heavily on through the world . . .'

"Question inside of KL Terezín 1944:
Are we going to survive them this time?
Answer in Hamburg after the war:
We have survived all the pyres.

"Flashback—Theresienstadt during the era of the beautifying campaign, Summer 1944.

"The freight trains carrying the least decorative of the old people have left for Auschwitz some weeks ago. The fronts of houses in the streets that matter have received an autochthonous coloured coat of paint and window-curtains (on the ground floor). Parks with rose-beds and a bandstand (no entry, on pain of death).— The stage is set for the sensational film by Kurt Gerron: DER FÜHRER SCHENKT DEN JUDEN EINE STADT.

"Quaint signposts, carved and painted in the Erzgebirge style, point the way to such and such a place. They also serve as flower-stands and are thus entwined with lovely (really lovely) petunias and cresses. One represents a waiter with flying dresscoat tails: To the dining rooms. (The hastily erected barracks, used solely for the film, bears in large white letters the inscription 'Dining Hall I'.) A bespectacled gnome on a pile of books points the way to the Central Library.

"The library itself, like its name, has been embellished to the point of being unrecognizable. Its store of books—almost doubled by the contents of the book-cases af all families evacuated from all the territories occupied by the Germans, has been neatly arranged on modern steel racks in four brightly lighted connecting rooms. Everywhere, in the gangways between the rows of books, leaning against the walls,

against the doorposts, there are SS. The camp commander went out of his way to supervise the film people from Prague at their work in person. Mr. Gerron is perspiring.

"Focus—the office of Prof. Utitz, turned out to look very much like a director's office. Close up: The splendid backs of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* and the *Jüdisches Lexicon* shine brightly in the light of the Kleig lights. The eyes, the looks of everyone are concentrated on that brightness.—Hidden behind those volumes, flat on the shelf, modestly in the shade, lie the collected works of Alfred Kerr.

"New set—Theresienstadt after the large transports at the end of October 1944.—Focus on the Central Library.

"The beauty of the film sets is a thing of the past. The neatly arranged rows of books are in disorder. Untidy heaps of books on the floor. Everything points to work hastily abandoned in a panic. Obviously, the dusk of autumn descends upon the world outside. It also prevails in here. Of 19 members of the staff only two have escaped the holocaust: the Boss and his new Chief Librarian.

"What a career—nine months after having started as the girl handing out the books in the lending library in the second-highest position in the enterprise. That's what death did for you—it always vacated the posts in Terezín. In a flash the post was vacant for the successor, in another flash for the successor's successor.—Other hands concealed your books in the darkness right under the ceiling of the ghetto library L 304, others took them away secretly to convey them carefully to the new home of the L 514 which under the stress of the 'beautifying campaign' became Park Street No. 14, others, finally, took them out of their hidingplace, when the time came."

This is the story of AK in the KZ.

The library recovered surprisingly soon from its blood-letting in the autumn. After all, there was an almost inexhaustible supply of human material. Professor Utitz, who throughout the summer had been in bed with a lung disease and had been replaced by Dr. Maxmilian Adler, took up the management again, although only half recovered when Dr. Adler, too, had to leave with a transport.

But before the transport, the library saw another climax when surprisingly the big gymnasium was handed over. After the hubbub of the film, with dancing under sunshades in the terrace (evening dress had to be worn) and straws in tall glasses of lemonade, was over and done with, this assembly hall, so unlike everything one might expect in Theresienstadt, became part of the "Jewish settlement." In it we installed a proper reading room, which was looked after by the ladies Bamberger, Bloemendal and Hanusch. There we arranged a small exhibition of reproductions of incunabula and illuminated manuscripts barbarically cut from duplicate volumes and set in frames supplied by the building yard. In this calmness before the storm we all deluded ourselves with the notion that we were doing some meaningful work.

Even after the transports, another branch was established: The Danish Library. Case loads of books arrived from Denmark. New books, smelling of freshness, printed on glossy paper, in Danish. They were in a small room on the south side of the higher-ups' house, Seestrasse 20. Dr. Friediger, the Rabbi of Copenhagen, came to meet us for the opening ceremony. On our way with him across the shadows cast by the still leafless trees of Seestrasse, in the sunshine of the early spring

of 1945, Dr. Friediger said: "If they should come to fetch me back home—I would follow them as I am now. I would not even return to my lodgings to fetch my jacket."
And shortly afterwards the miracle happened: the King of Denmark sent for his subjects to be brought back home. Snowy white Swedish buses stood in front of the "Jäger" barracks. On each red leather seat there was a packet of cigarettes and a bar of chocolate. There was an edifying moment when "Herr" Rahm, with the countenance of a generous benefactor, set out to enter one of the cars for inspection, and a young Swedish officer with arms outspread barred his way. In doing so, he said one word only:

Extraterritorial

In this way, liberation announced itself.
But we did not know.





HANS HOFER

THE FILM ABOUT TEREZÍN

a Belated Reportage



THIS FILM—or, rather, these two films—are unique in cinema history. A film in which 60,000 extras of every age play without salary would make the heart of any film producer beat high, if the film company were not the Propaganda Ministry of the Third Reich and the producer were not named Goebbels.

At the end of 1942 the report sped through the Terezín ghetto that a film of Terezín was to be made to counteract the "horror propaganda." It was to be directed by a Hauptsturmführer von Otto, from the staff of the former camp commander Dr. Seidel. The director called the Prague film director Irene Dodalová and gave her official orders to make a draft of a so-called cultural film within eight days. Mrs Dodalová managed to get the help of a former assistant director and a young cameraman and, with these two co-workers, have a proposal ready to present in the time set. Immediately, Herr von Otto ordered a room cleared in the "Hamburg" barracks in Terezín (costing six old women their places to sleep), and soon had it furnished with a desk, a typewriter, a drawing board, and so on, with notices on the door: "Office of Terezín Film" and "Entrance strictly forbidden."

A policeman from the ghetto guard (an organization to police the ghetto, modeled after the gendarmerie, under the military) and an official from the transport section (that saw to a smooth dispatching and reception of transports) were relieved of their regular work and devoted their entire time to the film script, as co-workers of director Dodalová. When the scenario was finished, it was presented to the head of the camp, sent to Berlin, and then weeks of waiting ensued. Other cares drove thoughts of the film away, but then one day the word came: "Shooting begins tomorrow." Next day great excitement reigned in the leisure-time staff, for the whole artistic personnel had been notified of the emergency. No one knew, actually, what was going to be filmed. A completely altered script came from Berlin, for a certain type of treatment had been agreed on. The first half had already been shot in Prague. The story was only too simple and true. A family had been unceremoniously put in the next transport and the camera followed the course of events. The scenes shot in Prague went as follows: Mr and Mrs Holländer—for that was the name of the man who paid for his short career as film star with premature deportation in a transport, three years of Terezín, and finally with his life in the Auschwitz gas chambers—received their call up to the transport. Holländer went to the Religious Community, the old Jewish Town Hall, a meeting of the Council of Elders, Holländer packed, then the trip to the collection point at the Fair Palace, three days in the Fair Palace, food distribution, sleeping, etc. After this came the loading of the railway cars, the journey, arrival in Bohušovice, marching by foot to Terezín, arrival in the ghetto. At this point the work of director Dodalová was to start. The following scenes were shot: Holländer was searched ("sluiced", in Terezín slang), Holländer was given lodging, Holländer went to the labour office, Holländer arrived at his place of work in the wood-working camp, Holländer went to get his food, Holländer went to the cabaret, Holländer went to bed . . . fade out. Inserted were a couple of dreary streets, a dirty children's home, etc. At the camera (hand-run) was the correspondent Sigismund.

The film came to Prague, was screened, and disappeared in some archives. No interview was made with the main performer. Nor were such small secrets of the studio made public, as the cuffing of a lighting technician because he had laid his

coat on the coat of an SS-man, or the story of the twenty selected, beautiful girls who had to swim an hour naked in a pool for Herr von Otto's enjoyment. But when all was said and done, the film was too dilettante a work to be used for propaganda purposes, and therefore it disappeared.

Then came an interval of two years, during which time much happened that—as could be ascertained much later—had a close connection with the second film. Orders came for a so-called "town beautification," i.e., all houses were freshly painted, the streets repaired, the main square with its rough cobblestones was ordered changed in eight days to a small park with grass, benches, gravel walks, flower plots, and a music pavilion where a 40-piece "spa orchestra" played three times a day. They could play only four compositions, for that was all the scores they had in Terezín.

In the former town park a children's crèche was built, all of glass, with small polished enamel beds, toys, rocking horses, and two trained nurses. The leisure-time activities were increased by order, more and more. We had the use of six theatre halls; to be sure, these were in the attics of dwellings, but two had complete lighting systems that could be switched on and off. The café was set up. The concert hall received from Prague a genuine Bechstein baby grand piano. The bank of the Jewish self-governing body was established and ghetto currency went into circulation. Shops, where confiscated goods were sold, opened. Eleven football teams played against each other for a cup. A sport field was set up on the bastions. One could see that the film company had seen to the sets needed for its film.

Meanwhile a transport from Holland brought the director and actor in numerous UFA films, Kurt Gerron, to Terezín. One fine summer day in 1944, Gerron was called to the commandant's office, where SS-Hauptsturmführer Rahm, henceforth to be camp commander, gave Gerron orders as a film specialist, to take over the direction and production of a new film, "The Führer Presents the Jews with a City." Gerron went for advice to the Jewish Elders and was told that in our situation there was no way of refusing this task. The script writer whom Gerron found was a Berlin haberdashery manufacturer by the name of Manfred Greifenhagen. The author reduced all the sights of Terezín to one common denominator for filming the different sections of the ghetto, and that was—water. For example, there was a shot of running water— the River Eger, that flowed by Terezín. Water spurting from the earth in thin streams' irrigation introduced the part on agriculture. Water flowing into a 300-litre kettle as a prelude to the scenes in the kitchen and store-houses. Water in a children's bathtub, introducing shots of the children's home and crèche. Water in a swimming pool, water in the shower rooms of the dwellings, etc. This script was accepted by Berlin, and this time a completely expert and professional approach to the job was used. The head of the newsreel of that time, called "Aktualita," was called from Prague to have charge of the shooting. Two professional cameramen were given the camera work. One of these was extraordinarily human and comradely, Zahradníček by name. His help could be given only by things like cigarettes thrust into the hand and whispered words of consolation, for during the shooting the camera was completely surrounded by SS-men.

This time the work days were properly scheduled for the filming, one knew in advance

what would be shot where, and there was a sound car, a light car, a spot light, a proper script and a complete technical working staff, the best the ghetto had, composed of a director, an assistant director, a lighting technician, a camera bearer, a hairdresser—in short it seemed like the shooting of a real film.

Gerron began with a shot of the façade of the bank of the Jewish self-governing body, where the mockery of an inscription stood: "Savings Deposits, Payments and Cash Deposits." Unwittingly I went past, whereupon Gerron called to me through the loudspeaker: "Hofer, please work as my assistant director, because the assistants they gave me evidently haven't seen a cinema from the inside." So I became assistant director and as such saw how this unique film came into being, from the first to the last shot.

The attitudes of the Terezín inhabitants differed greatly. A small number pushed forward and wanted absolutely to take part in the film, while the greater part of the people carried out passive resistance and cleared away immediately when they saw people with the white band that had "Film" printed on it. They could be made to work as extras only by force. It was quite a task to find among the 60,000 people those who looked like typical Jews from the point of view of Rosenberg's racial theories. That itself was not so easy in a ghetto where 60,000 Jews had been gathered as one might imagine. I have not found so many Nordic-looking people even in SS barracks as in this Jewish ghetto. Blonds were automatically excluded from the film, and a champion woman high jumper could not take part because she was blond.

After the shots of the bank came the post office, where people were to stand in line at the package window to receive packages that they had to give up again after the scene had been filmed. In this Potemkin-village fashion, the falsification of history went on. People were taken to the SS swimming baths to make the world believe the ghetto had a swimming beach. The best divers, including the champion of Czechoslovakia, had to make demonstration dives in the Eger. But the fact that the Eger was closed off right and left by boats filled with SS-men was not shown in the film, of course.

The meeting of the Council of Elders was moved from their gloomy office in the Magdeburg barracks into a light and very elegantly equipped office in the gymnasium for the filming. The speech that the Judenältester Dr. Epstein had to make was not taken down in sound, but synchronized in Berlin, and the good God knows what words were coordinated with the lip movements of Dr. Epstein.

And the crazy comedy went on. The firemen in new uniforms put out a simulated fire, the food rations were tripled, there was a mass weighing of the inmates and the first ten people who were filmed when they went to get their food had a feast. Outside the ghetto, in a meadow, an open-air cabaret was held for an audience of 2,000. A marshy meadow was chosen, where the people had to stand up to their ankles in water—surely to remind them that they were not there for pleasure. The place all around the audience was ringed with gendarmerie. The first act of "Tales of Hoffmann" was performed in the gymnasium, for which the inmates had been allowed to make their own decorations and costumes. In another hall a symphony orchestra conducted by the famous Prague conductor Karel Ančerl was filmed. On the terrace at the gymnasium a coffee house was installed, with big

umbrellas over the tables. In the garden close-ups were taken of the so-called "prominents," for example, the widow of a Danish admiral in conversation with the Austrian Field Marshall Lieutnant von Sommer, the Mayor of Lyons Mejér with his wife, talking with Dr. Epstein, and other prominent people from all spheres of art, politics, and science, such as the former Czechoslovak Minister Meissner, Privy Councillor Strauss, Privy Councillor Klang, Deputy Police Minister of Austria Schober, Privy Councillor Gans, etc.

Gerron had a very hard job, for not a piece of the film strip did he see. The director of the shooting told him what was good and what was bad.

They gaily continued with the falsifications. A set-up operation in the hospital, a transport arriving from Holland, with the Hauptsturmführer Rahm personally lifting the Jewish children from the railway car, an obligatory 5 o'clock tea in the coffee house, to the tune of a 12-piece jazz band, that lasted until two in the morning—since the coffee house did not seem impressive enough, it was transferred to the large hall in the gymnasium. In filming the crèche the main shots were of the wall paintings made by the Dutch artist Spier, as well as a swing and a toboggan that, of course, were sent away again the next day. In the main square couples promenaded as a band played, while old people sat on the benches. Then came shots of a specially built dining hall. The camera travelled through the workshops, the carpenter shop, the shoe shop, the laundry.

One day the apparition disappeared as fast as it had come. The band was not allowed to play any more, no one was allowed to sit on the benches, dancing was forbidden on pain of heavy punishment and the general well-being that had been shown by the film changed back again into the gray daily life of Terezín, with its filth, hunger and disease.

Since the 60,000 film extras were no longer needed, the ghetto was liquidated down to 12,000 people, while the extras received their payment in the gas chambers of Auschwitz. The dear little children that had been so tenderly filmed as they slept, ate, played, and swung, were thrown alive into burning ditches of oil.

Nothing is known of the further fate of the film. It was developed in Prague under the sharpest SS supervision, copied and sent to Berlin.

This is the story of the film about Terezín, proof that the Propaganda Ministry misused film for the greatest falsification in world history.



ERICH KULKA

TEREZÍN, A MASK FOR AUSCHWITZ



IN 1943 the world press and radio began to carry more and more reports about the Nazis' death camps in occupied territories in the East. Goebbels searched for conclusive evidence to weaken and refute the wave of undesirable "Greuelpropaganda," especially because the "final solution of the Jewish question" was far from completed.

As Goebbels noted in his diary at the time, the most difficult "Endlösung" awaited the Nazis in Hungary,[1] and it was not yet begun. In this situation a campaign was necessary to calm the future victims in the satellite states and at the same time hold back international intervention.

In Department IV B of the RSHA, for Solution of the Jewish Question, they toyed with the idea of using the good reputation of the "privileged Terezín ghetto" and decided to take part of it to the centre of the death camp in Auschwitz.

On September 6, 1943, two "Transports to the East" were sent from Terezín, marked in the deportation lists with the code "DL" and "DM", carrying a total of 5,007 men, women and children. The next day a transport arrived at the Auschwitz railway station.[2] The old Auschwitz inmates were astonished. The SS-men, who usually robbed and mistreated the deported prisoners when a transport arrived, had turned into gentlemen. They were polite, helped to carry the children, supported the old people, and saw to it that the luggage remained untouched. For the first time in the history of the camp there was no selection for the gas chambers on the platform, and all the passengers were taken to thirty wooden horse stalls in the new camp Auschwitz II-Birkenau, section B-II-b, that had not yet been occupied. This was the only one of the 39 Auschwitz camps where families could live together and where the Nazis allowed them certain privileges they had enjoyed in the Terezín ghetto.[3] The people from Terezín were strictly isolated from the other Auschwitz camp and were allowed no contact with the other prisoners. They had their own self-administration, with the exception that was the rule in the other Auschwitz camps: the function of Lagerältester (trusty of the camp) was given to the professional criminal Arno Boehm, who wore the green BV on his prison garb.[4] For the old Auschwitz inmates the setting up of this privileged camp was an inexplicable mystery, while the Terezín camp members considered their family camp a continuation of the Terezín ghetto. They had various privileges that confirmed their notion that they had a special position as compared with the other Auschwitz prisoners. This is also shown by the only published document announcing the establishment of this camp. This is a letter sent in the first days after arrival by a former member of the Terezín Ältestenrat Dr. Leo Janowitz, through the Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland in Berlin, to a representative of the Jewish World Congress Dr. Riegner in Geneva. We learn from this letter that, under Janowitz's direction, a new Jewish settlement—Arbeitslager Birkenau—is to be built up. Janowitz hopes that in doing so he can apply the experiences gained in building Terezín and requests that food and medicament parcels continue to be sent from the International Red Cross to Birkenau.[5] There is also mention of sending these food parcels to Birkenau in the correspondence of the Slovak Red Cross with the German Red Cross.[6]

One of the privileges, which was also an official obligation, was that the prisoners in the family camp were to write to relatives and friends in Terezín and in their former

home towns. Although the Terezín family camp was not quite three kilometres distant from the main Auschwitz camp and only a few hundred meters from the gas chambers of the crematoria, those who received the censored letters read that these who had been deported to the East still lived and were building a new, as yet unknown, "Arbeitslager Birkenau bei Neu-Berun."
On December 16 and 20, 1944, another 4,964 men, women, and children arrived from Terezín, and again they were lodged without preliminary selection in the Terezín family camp. The number of prisoners in it had risen to almost 10,000, filling the capacity of the camp. The "Decembrites"[7] also wrote the official letters. A flow of food parcels came to Birkenau from Bohemia and Moravia and from the International Red Cross.

At the end of February a commission from Berlin visited the family camp in Birkenau. Among the members of the commission was the head of the RSHA IV B, Adolf Eichmann, and the head of the foreign department of the German Red Cross, Niehaus. The commission showed considerable interest in life in the family camp. They stayed longest in the "school" that had been set up in a wooden horse stall in Block 31. The director of the school was Fredy Hirsch, who was one of the spiritual leaders of the camp.
Eichmann had words of praise for the unique attempt to built a centre for cultural life in these surroundings. On March 5 the head of Birkenau, SS Obersturmführer Hans Schwarzhuber, came to the camp and ordered the Jewish leaders of the camp to prepare the prisoners from the September transport to be moved to a new camp "Heydebreck." A small group of Terezín prisoners from the underground resistance movement in a neighbouring camp were informed that "Operation Heydebreck" meant death in the gas chambers. Any attempts to organize resistance, however, were thwarted by a number of carefully thought out, camouflage measures taken by Schwarzhuber. Not until the Terezín prisoners were in the basement dressing rooms of the crematorium did they find out the deception. They fought back, attacking the armed guards with their bare hands. The SS were prepared for this resistance. With the butts of their guns and flame-throwers they finished the work of destruction. The prisoners crossed the threshold of the gas chambers with broken heads, bleeding wounds. According to testimony of one of the members of the so-called Sonderkommando, Philip Müller, who survived the death camp, they died in the gas chambers singing the Czechoslovak national anthem and "Hatikvah." Fredy Hirsch, who had refused to revolt at the last moment, considering it would lead to an inhuman massacre of children, poisoned himself before going to the crematorium. On March 3 those who had been condemned to death received cards for writing home dated March 25, 1944, with the explanation that the censorship would hold them up quite a while.[9]
Instead of relieving the crowding in the family camp, two months later it was filled again with a new transport from the Terezín ghetto, and it became clear that this would be a large-scale alibi campaign, based on periodic deportations from Terezín and liquidation in Auschwitz. Each deported group had a task to carry out in the period when they were living in the privileged family camp, the task for which this camp had been built—to refute the reports that had been spread about

the massacres in Auschwitz and to prepare for the smooth running of deportation operations from the ghettos.

The background for this campaign, the purpose of which the prisoners only suspected at the time, and which was not even explained at the Eichmann trial, is disclosed by hitherto unpublished documents from the correspondence of the foreign department of the German Red Cross, the microfilms of which are in the Yad Washem archives. The most important is a collection of letters between the German Red Cross and Eichmann's department in the RSHA, and between the German Red Cross and the International Red Cross in Geneva, dealing with the answers to questions as to the fate of the deported. For our purposes the most important correspondence was that discussing a visit to Terezín and "a Jewish labour camp" and the letters that identified this Jewish labour camp as the "Arbeitslager Birkenau."[10]

One of the key documents that make possible for the first time the explanation of the circumstances surrounding the liquidation of the September transport is Niehaus' letter to the RSHA on March, 14, 1944, a week after the mass execution of the Terezín prisoners. In his letter the head of the foreign department of the German Red Cross Niehaus refers to discussions with the head of the Prague Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung Hans Guenther, on March 6, 1944, and a discussion with Eichmann a few days before that, in regard to a visit to Terezín and Birkenau by a commission of the International Red Cross. Niehaus pointed out how important it was for the food parcels, and more especially the medicaments, from the International Red Cross, to be given to the prisoners and for representatives of the Geneva International Red Cross to have the possibility of convincing themselves of this by a personal visit. In conclusion Niehaus stressed the urgency of the purpose of a visit to these camps:

"Angesichts der sich mehrenden ausländischen Anfragen über die verschiedenen jüdischen Lager erscheint die wiederholt erörtete Zweckmässigkeit dieser geplanten Lagerbesuche im erhöhtem Masse gegeben."*

It is clear that the purpose of the liquidation ordered by Eichmann a few days after the above-mentioned discussion was to free some space for further deportees from Terezín. At that time the ghetto was overcrowded and the tightly packed buildings were a hindrance to the "beautifying campaign" which was supposed to prepare the privileged Jewish settlement for a visit from the International commission.[11] "Resettlement" of Terezín inhabitants to Birkenau was at the same time to help the commission to check on the prisoners deported from Terezín.

After further correspondence, the visit was permitted by Himmler in a letter to Niehaus on May 11, 1944:

"Der Reichsführer SS hat der Besichtigung des Ghettos Theresienstadt und eines jüdischen Arbeitslagers durch Sie und einen Vertreter des Internationalen Komitees des Roten Kreuzes zugestimmt . . . Als Besichtigungstermin ist Anfang Juni 1944 vorgesehen . . ."**

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* "In view of the increasing enquiries from abroad about the different Jewish camps, it would seem that the repeatedly stated expediency of this planned visit to the camp is now even greater."

** "The Reichsführer of the SS has agreed to the visit at the Terezín ghetto and a Jewish labour camp by you and a representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross . . . The date envisaged for the visit is the beginning of June 1944 . . ."

The words "eines jüdischen Arbeitslagers" and "einen Vertreter des Internationalen Komitees" are underlined and a handwritten note in the margin adds that on May 19, 1944, at 6:00 p.m., the news of permission to visit this camp had been given by telephone to the Swiss delegation for Dr. Marti (?).

The visit to Terezín took place on June 23, 1944. Niehaus wrote of the results to Hartmann, the representative of the German Red Cross in Switzerland, in a report dated June 27, 1944:

"Die Besichtigung in Theresienstadt ist für alle Teile zufriedenstellend verlaufen. Ich bin davon überzeugt, dass die ausländischen Vertreter günstig hierüber berichten werden . . ."*

The protocols on the favourable course of the visit are well known[12] and we may assume that after the successful result of the inspection tour that, according to the above-mentioned German representatives, fully satisfied the demands of the International Commission, the existence of the "Jewish labour camp in Birkenau" was superfluous. And a few days later it was liquidated, but this time according to the usual Auschwitz practice—by selection.

A group of Jewish prisoners from the underground resistance movement, who had not succeeded in convincing the inmates of the B-II-b Terezín camp in March that they should resist when they were in danger of liquidation, now drew their conclusions from the fate of the September transport. It was clear that the Nazis were preparing to continue without interruption the liquidation campaign, and that the main point would be Auschwitz, after the loss of the eastern territories. Further proof was the prolongation of the railway spurs and the construction that was going on night and day on an extensive three-track concrete sorting platform in the inmediate vicinity of the crematorium. In the given situation it seemed to the prisoners that the only effective possibility to thwart this final phase of annihilating European Jewry was to expose in a convincing way the nature of the alibi campaign of deportation to Birkenau, to warn those who were in danger and arouse the general public throughout the world to take decisive retaliatory measures. Reports sent by the Polish resistance movement from the main camp Auschwitz I had got to foreign countries, it is true, but it seemed they were not convincing enough, and they did not bring the requested help. The prisoners who reflected on the situation were convinced that only personal testimony of well informed eye witnesses who had escaped from Auschwitz would penetrate the barrier of indifference and of doubts about the reliability of reports about Auschwitz.

Organizing an escape from Auschwitz was immensely difficult. The camps of the Auschwitz industrial and liquidation concern were surrounded by high fences of electrified barbed wire, a system of deep ditches and a chain of watch-towers supplemented by packs of trained dogs. The civilian population had been evacuated from an area of forty square kilometres or the so-called "Interessengebiet Auschwitz" (region of Auschwitz interests). The space where the camps were located, along with the Nazi industrial enterprises, the construction sites and prisoners' work places were declared a closed area—"Sperrgebiet." Every time an attempt to escape

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* "The visit to Terezín proceeded satisfactorily for all parties. I am convinced that the representatives from abroad will give favourable reports about it . . ."

was reported the watchtowers remained occupied day and night with a great chain of guards—"Grosse Postenkette."

Despite all this, 230 attempts to escape were recorded during the period of existence of Auschwitz and about 80 of these daring feats were successful. Five who escaped immediately after the first liquidation of the family camp had a higher goal than preserving their own lives.

There were three successful actions by Jewish prisoners, completely unrelated, but ones that can be considered the climax of the efforts of the underground resistance movement to inform the world.

The first was an escape from the most strictly isolated Terezín family camp, under circumstances that had no parallel in Auschwitz. On April 5, 1944, Vítězslav Lederer fled dressed in an SS uniform, with one of the guards of the family camp, SS-Rottenführer Viktor Pestek.

Pestek was by origin Rumanian "folk German" and had fallen in love with a beautiful Jewish girl, Renée Neumann, in the Terezín family camp. He wanted to save her from the liquidation that threatened her in June. But Renée refused to leave her mother. Therefore Pestek sought a safe refuge for himself and for both women, where they could wait out the war. Lederer saw here an opportunity to carry out his plan and offered Pestek his help in finding a refuge at friends' homes in Bohemia. He says of his courageous deed:

"On the agreed day a red light blinked three times in the window of the SS-guardhouse at the gate of the family camp. At that moment I opened the door in the wash house block and, dressed in the uniform af an SS-Scharführer, provided with the silver cord of the 'Sonderdienst', I mounted the bicycle that had been made ready and, with the salute 'Heil Hitler', given with outstretched right arm, I rode through the iron gates of the family camp. My 'colleague' SS-Rottenführer Viktor Pestek, opened the gate for me, as he was on duty that night. He reported to his replacement for night duty that he was going on leave. Accompanied by Pestek, I went through a chain of guards and the password 'Tintenfass' opened the bars for us. When Pestek and I reached the nearby Auschwitz railway station at 8:30 p.m., we jumped at the last moment into the moving express.

"At the border station of Bohumín we were threatened by the strict control of personal documents. The 'Soldbuch' that Pestek had loaned me would not have satisfied the border guards. We went down to the postal car and Pestek suddenly opened the doors, loudly crying out: 'Heil Hitler! Paketenkontrolle!' Two surprised railwaymen looked on immobile as we seized the suspicious parcels, nor did the customs guards find our zealous work out of the ordinary, when they looked through the car. When the express pulled into Prague the alarm sirens were sounding in Birkenau and the SS-men from the Hundestaffel had sent the trained dogs on my scent. The teleprinters in Berlin, in Oranienburg and at police chief stations and border crossing points were tapping out the text of my warrant of arrest, sent from the offices of the Auschwitz Gestapo.[15] We arrived safely in Pilsen and there we found our first hiding place and aid at the house of my friends from the Weidmann resistance group.[16]

"After our successful escape, my first task was to warn the inmates of Terezín. With

the aid of my friend Václav Veselák of Travčice, who went regularly to the Terezín barracks to shave the policemen guarding the ghetto, I got safely by a secret path into the ghetto whence the Nazis had deported me to Auschwitz. I told a small group of friends, among whom were the head of the fire brigade, Leo Holzer, Jirka Petschauer of the 'Ghettowache', and Otto Schliesser, member of the Ältestenrat, about the liquidation of the September transport and explained the whole murder machinery of Auschwitz. My friends believed me, but most of the Terezín inhabitants found my story unbelievable. The cards signed by those who had been gassed, that arrived in Terezín after the senders' death, were a more convincing argument for these people.

"I repeated my visit to the ghetto two more times. I carried letters for my friends and brought them arms and radio parts. From my last visit I carried out a report on the Terezín ghetto and about the Nazi secret archives that had been transferred after the bombing of Berlin to the 'Sudeten' barracks.[17] Carrying this report and equipped with papers of a military-exempt mechanical engineer, I went to the southwest German-Swiss border, to the town of Constance, on Lake Constance. Through a boatman I smuggled in the report on Terezín and Auschwitz to the International Red Cross in Geneva. Meanwhile, however, the time set for liquidating the December transports in the Terezín family camp was drawing near, and Renée Neumann was in danger. Pestek insisted on carrying out the second part of the plan. In the middle of June we boarded an international express in Prague, dressed in officers' uniforms. The plan was simple: a masterly forged letter, with the letterhead of the Berlin RSHA and the stamp of the Prague Gestapo, empowered Untersturmführer Hauser—Pestek—and Obersturmführer Welker—me—to take two women from the family camp in Birkenau for questioning.

"When our train was approaching Auschwitz, Pestek decided to continue the journey to nearby Myslowice, where he wanted to pick up some valuables he had left with his former Polish woman friend, things he had gathered from deportees in the transports. I got out at Auschwitz and tested whether we would be able to get an automobile by showing our papers, at the Auschwitz 'Fahrbereitschaft', to take the women for questioning to Gestapo headquarters in Katowice, not far away.

"At noon the next day, at the agreed hour, I awaited my associate at the Auschwitz station. Shortly before the train arrived, the railway buildings were surrounded by the striking force of the SS on motorcycles. They cleared the platforms and when the train from Myslowice came into the station, they surrounded it from all sides. Pestek leaned out of the next to last car. The commander of the squad recognized Pestek, jumped on the steps of the car and shooting began. Pestek defended himself. A hand grenade exploded among the SS-men on the platform. I took advantage of the subsequent confusion, jumped out of the waiting room window, jumped on the nearest unguarded motorcycle and rode off toward Bohumín.[18] In two hours I was travelling in an express train towards Ostrava. I found a safe hiding place with my friends in the Terezín ghetto. As I hid in it secretly I helped a small group of Terezín inmates to prepare resistance in case the expected liquidation of the ghetto began.

"The reports that had been coming in to the International Red Cross in Switzerland meantime had effect. Acceding to the constant demands of charitable organiza-

tions and under pressure of reports about the annihilation of Jews, the Nazis gave permission for inspection of the ghetto. Terezín began to be prepared for a high-level international visit. The 'beautifying campaign' that was announced deceived not only the members of the International Commission, but also confused the minds of most of the Terezín prisoners. At my urging and warning not to believe anything the Nazis said, even the well initiated officials of the ghetto answered: 'Now, when the Nazis are losing the war, they will need us for an alibi. Revolt, when the International Red Cross is taking an interest in us? Any attempt at rebellion would be suicide!' Even my most trusted friends in the Holzer fire-fighting brigade cooled off toward me. Rumors circulated that a partisan had appeared in the ghetto, bringing weapons. I was in danger of betrayal. I left the ghetto and joined the partisans in Slovakia. When the Uprising was suppressed, I returned to the partisans in the Zbraslav area and there we carried out various acts of sabotage against the SS until Prague was liberated."[19]

This testimony by Lederer is confirmed to the smallest detail by a record of Lederer's activity up to 1945 in partisan squad 28 "Plzeňák" in Zbraslav. Furthermore, later testing of the data by living witnesses like Leo Holzer of Prague, the former head of the Terezín fire-fighting brigade, former members of the Weidmann sabotage group living in Pilsen, with whom Lederer hid during the war, and, in particular, his former fellow-prisoner in Terezín and Auschwitz, Mirek Zeimer of Prague, gives this testimony the character of documentary proof, a direct source of information about this outstanding act of militancy for which Lederer was given state honours after liberation. There is no doubt that Lederer's courageous return just before new, large deportations to Auschwitz were begun in September and October 1944, led the inhabitants of the ghetto to start preparations for resistance in case of liquidation or mass deportation. These actions by the prisoners were thwarted, mainly by a number of crafty camouflage actions, such as the so-called "beautifying campaign," the visit of the International Commission, the filming, and luring the prisoners who were capable of resisting into going on the so-called labour transports to the Reich, transports that ended in Auschwitz.

According to the testimony of the last president of the Ältestenrat Murmelstein, in the trial against the commander of the Terezín ghetto Karl Rahm, the arrest and execution of Murmelstein's predecessor, Dr. Paul Epstein, in September 1944, was also carried out in connection with the suppression of preparations for resistance. According to the confession of Rahm himself, it was his task at that time to prevent at any cost the repetition of the example of the uprising in the Warsaw ghetto, for which preparations were also being started in Terezín, after Lederer's reports on the fate of those deported to Auschwitz.

It has not been possible so far to get any reliable reports about the second part of Lederer's mission, the results of his attempt to give information to the International Red Cross in Switzerland. There can be no doubt, however, that he actually carried out his part, for there is proof of his trip to Constance in May 1944.

What Lederer probably did not succeed in doing, or in any case, we have no definite information that he did so, was carried out with brilliant success in two other escapes of Jewish prisoners from Auschwitz, who fled to Slovakia. They ran away two days after Lederer did, and the reason for speeding up this long-prepared

action was the liquidation of Terezín prisoners and an attempt to prevent a second catastrophe planned for June.

In contrast to Lederer's flight to Bohemia, where all the Jewish population had already been deported, in Slovakia the Jewish communities were organized and maintained active contact with the free world. Thanks to this situation, the reports of the later escapes were rapidly and dependably delivered abroad, and we are much better informed about the response to them.

Two days after Lederer's escape, the alarm sirens in Birkenau announced the flight of two other Jewish prisoners. After fruitless search in the "Sperrgebiet" and the "Interessengebiet Auschwitz," the department of the Auschwitz Gestapo sent telegram No. 2334/44, as follows:[21]

"To the RSHA 4, Berlin 2, to the SS WHV Amtsgruppe D, Oranienburg, to all Gestapo chiefs, to all criminal police chiefs—stations. Concerning: detained Jews (1) Rosenberg Walter Israel, born Sept. 11, 1924, in Topoľčany, delivered to camp June 30, 1942, by RSHA. (2) Wetzler, Alfred Israel, born May 10, 1918, in Trnava, delivered on April 13, 1942, by the RSHA. Rosenberg and Wetzler fled on April 7, 1944, from the concentration camp Auschwitz II, section II A and II D. The search operations that were immediately undertaken remain so far without success. It is requested that from that end search measures be undertaken and in case of capture that Auschwitz be informed. Additional for the RSHA: request that striking out of Rosenberg and Wetzler from central register be arranged from that end. Note for the SS-WVh: recommended that report be made to the Reichsführer. Further report follows. Guard's guilt not yet established . . ."

Walter Rosenberg was a prison stenographer in the prison block in the quarantine camp Birkenau, section B-II-a. Alfred Wetzler had the same office in the main racial camp in Birkenau, in section B-II-d. This position that had a certain degree of privilege gave them relatively free movement in all the camps and permitted them to obtain precise information on the course of deportations, selections and liquidation of prisoners in Auschwitz. With the help of fellow prisoners from the building command, they built themselves a bunker in section B-III —a deep hole that was well disguised with planks and wooden building parts for barracks. They protected themselves from dogs who were searching for them by sprinkling tobacco mixed with petrol around the bunker. They waited three days and three nights in this hiding place until the moment when on the evening of April 10 they heard the longed-for command: "Call in the chain of guards!" Only then did they leave their cover that was scarcely 500 meters from the guardhouse and crawled beyond the area of towers that had been left empty by the great emergency chain of guards.[22]

After ten days' flight full of dramatic adventures, Wetzler and Rosenberg crossed the German-Slovak border. Then came three days of rest and treating their wounded feet in the home of farmer Čanský in Skalitá village, whereupon they started on their way to the town of Čadca and from there to the regional seat of Žilina.

The escaping prisoners did not realize and perhaps do not yet know that the aid they received was probably the first organized campaign of Jewish organizations in Slovakia to help concentration camp inmates. According to the testimony of a member of the underground working group of the committee of assistance, Mr

Karmil-Krasňanský of Bratislava, this organization provided financial means for paying farmers at the border to give first aid to Jewish runaways from Poland.
The first contact with the escapees was made by a member of the Jewish Religious Community in Žilina, Ernst Steiner, who immediately announced their arrival by telephone to the Jewish Headquarters in Bratislava. Karmil-Krasňanský came directly to Žilina, and, as he said later, spoke with the escaped prisoners for three days and then put their account into a 26-page protocol after he returned to Bratislava, telling of the death camp Auschwitz-Birkenau. This he prefaced with a one-page introduction:

Bratislava, May 17, 1944

"Two young Slovak Jews, whose names should not be given in the interest of their safety, were deported from Slovakia in 1942 and spent two full years in the concentration camps of Birkenau-Auschwitz, and Lublin-Majdanek. They succeeded in escaping miraculously.

"One was taken from the collection point Sered directly to Auschwitz on April 13, 1942, and from there to Birkenau, the other was shifted from Nowsky to Lublin, and, after a short stay there, brought to Auschwitz and then Birkenau.

"The report that is here presented does not contain all that these two have experienced during their internment. What was written down was what one or both together had gone through, seen or directly observed and experienced. No individual impressions were described and nothing is conveyed that they found out only on the basis of accounts of third persons.

"The report is drawn up so as to describe, first, the experiences and observations of the young Jew who was sent from Sered. This description is followed by an account from the point of time when the second was also taken to Birkenau, on the basis of the story told by both. Then follows the report of the second Jew, who had been sent from Nowsky to Lublin and from there to Auschwitz.

"The statements coincide with the reports that have been received so far, true, only in fragmentary form, but still reliable, and their data given about the different transports are exactly the same as the official figures on these. The statements should therefore be considered completely trustworthy."

According to data given by Rosenberg and Wetzler, Karmil-Krasňanský had a sketch made by a professional architect of the ground plan of the two main Auschwitz camps, clearly marking the buildings where liquidation took place and the railway communications. Karmil-Krasňanský joined an appendix to the protocol, calling on the Allied Powers to destroy the Auschwitz crematoria and the roads leading to the camp.[23]

The further path of the protocol is described by Karmil-Krasňanský as follows: "Naturally our working group took counsel on ways to use the protocol. We decided to forward the protocol to the following addresses: to the liaison committee in Istambul, to Mr Nathan Schwalb in Geneva, one copy to the Papal Nuntio (Borzio) in Bratislava for the purpose of forwarding it to the Vatican. Furthermore, a protocol was handed to Dr. Kastner, to be forwarded to the Reichs deputy Horthy and Prince Primasz Seredy. I myself translated the protocol into Hungarian, at the request of Dr. Kastner, so that Hungarians who did not understand German

could read it. Rabbi Weissmandel had a copy made in Yiddish and had this copy sent to his liaison people, the Orthodox in Switzerland. Copies were also sent to Istambul and London, where they apparently were given appropriate attention. The discussion in the working group was participated in by Mrs Gisi Fleischmann, Leo Rosenthal, Dr. Tibor Kovacz, Dr. Oscar Neumann, Rabbi Frieder, Rabbi Weissmandel, Architect Steiner, Director Fuerst and perhaps others.

Nathan Schwalb, to whom the protocol that was sent to Switzerland was forwarded, was delegated by the Jewish Agency or by the Histadrutha Ovdim. Our contact with him was made by secret couriers who delivered our reports in a very reliable way.[25]

After the escapes in April, conditions got very much worse for the Jewish inmates in Birkenau. The SS-men took out their anger on the Jewish prisoners, punished and harassed them for even the slightest misdemeanor. Schwarzhuber took all functions away from Jewish inmates and assigned them to the worst work commands. The administration also affected the leader of the Jewish block Arnošt Rosin in camp B-II-d, where Alfred Wetzler had been stenographer. They questioned Rosin, tortured him, accused him of helping Wetzler to escape and as punishment sent him to hard labor in the gravel pit. There Rosin got acquainted with another Jewish prisoner Mordowicz, who had been transferred from his job as prison stenographer to the same command. While at work they discovered a short, low passage in the wall of the gravel pit—the bunker—covered with gravel after the escape of the other prisoners. In unguarded moments at work they alternated their jobs with fixing the bunker and waited for a suitable opportunity.

In the meanwhile, nothing in Auschwitz gave any indication that the April escape had succeeded as anticipated. Deportations increased. From May 15 onward there began to arrive on the extended spur line to the new station of death in Birkenau, with the precision of a devilish time schedule, dozens of deportation trains from Hungary and the area in Slovakia and Transcarpathia that was occupied by Hungary. Day and night the flames leaped high from the chimneys of the crematoria and, since the ovens could not keep up with the gas chambers, the corpses were also cremated in fires built in pits. The Sonderkommando, doubled in honour of the 800 prisoners, ran the gas chambers and crematoria in continuous shifts. The output of the mechanized annihilation apparatus was increased and reached a record in that period: the belt line of the Auschwitz "Vergasungszentrale Europas" swallowed up in 24 hours almost 20,000 men, women, and children, who were turned into smoke and ashes.

On May 27, 1944, the sirens in Auschwitz-Birkenau announced the escape of two additional prisoners[25]: Arnošt Rosin of Snina, Slovakia, and Czeslaw Mordowicz of Mlawa, Poland. Three days later, when, after a vain search in the area around the camp, the commander of the SS-guard called off the chain of guards from the watch-towers, Rosin and Mordowicz left their hiding place in the underground passage by the gravel pit, near the water supply "kommando." They crawled past the section by the watchtowers in the dark, swam across the River Sola and fled in the direction of Krakow, where Mordowicz hoped to find some connections. But near the little town of Chelmek they came across a "round up"—the total mobilization of manpower in occupied Poland. They changed their route and at

a rural railway station climbed on the roof of an over-crowded local train headed in the direction of the Polish spa Zakopané. In the forest-covered terrain before reaching Nový Targ, they jumped from the train and forded the flooded river Černý Dunajec. They followed along the river through the forest and, when Rosin found a box with the label "Slovak matches", he knew they had reached home. In the nearest village Nedeca they went into an inn. It was noon, June 6, 1944, and the radio was announcing that American troops were landing on the shores of France. Rosin felt safe in his home country of Slovakia and forgot to be cautious. The people in the inn, rejoicing in the news of the invasion, offered the escapees a mug of beer apiece and began to drink to the success of the invading troops. Suddenly, the gun barrels of Slovak gendarmes appeared in the door of the inn. They led off the escaped prisoners to the district gaol in Stará Spišská Ves. In vain the refugees declared, during questioning, that they had run away from forced labour in Germany. The police wanted to return them.

"You will return only our corpses," said Rosin and requested that they permit him to talk with an official of the local Jewish community. Mr Mangel came and, in the presence of the police chief, spoke with the escaped prisoners and then went to take counsel. He soon returned and passed each a dollar bill through the window bars of the prison, so they could be accused of smuggling. The court in Liptovský Mikuláš pronounced sentence: "Eight days imprisonment and five thousand crowns' fine." Representatives of the Jewish community paid the fine and the liberated "smugglers" were lodged where it seemed the safest—in the Jewish Old People's home in Liptovský Mikuláš.

The testimony of Karmil-Krasňanský shows that, just as the Slovak Jews organized help for the escaped prisoners through the farmers when they crossed the borders, they also bribed the police forces to save those who were caught after crossing.[26]

Rosin and Mordowicz met their fellow prisoners Rosenberg and Wetzler for the first time in the Jewish Old People's Home.[27]

As he had done at the end of April in Žilina, Karmil-Krasňanský now wrote protocols about the new escapees in the early part of June. The discussions were carried on in the flat of a member of the local Jewish community, Mr. Boba Reich in Liptovský Mikuláš. These new protocols had only about five pages of information additional to what was covered in the protocols about the first escapes in April. This appendix contained mainly important new data on the deportation and mass destruction of the Hungarian Jews in Auschwitz, which Rosin and Mordowicz witnessed before their escape. Shortly after the middle of June, the main Slovak anti-Semite, Minister Šaňo Mach, was expected to visit Liptovský Mikuláš. Extensive security measures were taken before this visit in Liptovský Mikuláš and all four escapees were given false papers and they left for Bratislava, where the underground Jewish organization connected with the Jewish Headquartes gave them asylum and help.

Documents were furnished them by Karmil-Krasňanský. The forgeries were competent and reliable. The new names of the refugees were registered in the books of the home communities and were traditional names in that region. One of the ex-prisoners said of them: "Our papers were so good we could have registered and studied at the Bratislava University with them." Neither the original nor the

new names, nor the prison numbers of the escapees were mentioned in the protocol. Testimony by Karmil-Krasňanský gives the information that:
Walter Rosenberg took the name of Rudolf Vrba and kept it permanently,
Alfred Wetzler took the name Jozef Láník and uses it as pen name,
Czeslav Mordowicz became Petr of Podvlk, and
Arnošt Rosin became Ján Roháč.
The first sign that the protocols had arrived at their destination was the report from Mikuláš Sternfeld in Bratislava, who maintained direct contact with the papal nuncio Borzio in Slovakia. Karmil-Krasňanský tells about this in his testimony:[28]
"I got news from Mr. Mikuláš Sternfeld, that a legate or courier would like to see and speak with the escaped prisoners from Auschwitz. He requested me to take two of the escaped prisoners with me and to meet the courier referred to in the Piarist Monastery in Svätý Jur. I took Messrs Rosenberg and Mordowicz with me and we went to Svätý Jur... There we met Monsignore Mario, whose surname I no longer remember... I had the impression that he had read the protocol and was very familiar with it. He was cool and quite objective. Mr Mario made short notes. We sat there until about 9.00 o'clock in the evening, six hours altogether. He gave us wine and Camel cigarettes, which we saw for the first time, and he photographed the numbers engraved on the arms of both the former prisoners. Later he enquired in particular about the fate of the Catholic priests that had been interned in Auschwitz, which had not been mentioned in the protocol. In conclusion, I requested him to report all he had heard here to the appropriate places, especially direct to the Pope. I also entreated him to intervene with President Tiso to ease the lot of the 20,000 Jews who still remained in Slovakia, and to give them whatever help he could. He promised us all this. (Of the Nazis' misdeeds) Monsignore Mario had nothing to say, he just put questions and noted the answers."[28]
This objective description of the sober meeting between the Papal diplomat and the Auschwitz escapees puts in somewhat different light the information that had been known so far about the path and the effect of the Auschwitz protocols. Contrary to the testimony of the refugees themselves, it was not the Papal Nuncio Borzio who met with the ex-prisoners in Svätý Jur, but the Papal courier Mario, sent for the purpose of checking on the protocol. It was not his first acquaintance with the news from Auschwitz, but confirmed that the protocols had arrived at the Vatican, and that at least at that stage the Papal Curia was not passive. Both testimonies, however, coincide in attesting that the Papal Legate was interested in the fate of the priests in Auschwitz and that he promised to carry out all the requests made of him.[29]
Reports that have been published to date show that, besides the Vatican, all the other places to which the Bratislava organizations sent the protocols received them. They arrived first in Hungary, where the danger was most acute.[30]
But at the same time they got by various ways to Switzerland and from there in the middle of June 1944, through the consular representative of San Salvador Mantella, to the British Minister of Foreign Affairs Eden, and, in the United States, to President Roosevelt.[31]
In a space of time that has not yet been precisely determined, the protocols went by other routes through Istambul and Palestine with a personal letter from Weiz-

mann to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in London, with the urgent request to bomb the Auschwitz crematoria without delay.

The protocols gave a detailed report of the Auschwitz machinery of death, statistics of those deported, by country and nationality, the number that had died, the ground plan and division of the different sections of the camp. On pages 14 and 15 was given the first authentic report about the fate of the Jews deported from the Terezín ghetto. The report, beginning with the serial numbers 148,000 to 152,000 which were tattooed subcutaneously on the left arm of the Terezín prisoners, states:

"In the week beginning September 7, 1943, the 'family transports' of Jews from Terezín arrived. For us it was completely incomprehensible that these transports seemed to enjoy an exclusive position such as had never before been seen. Families were not separated, not one of them was sent to the gas chambers as would otherwise have been a matter of course. They did not have their heads shaved and they were gathered, men, women and children, in a separate part of the camp and could keep their luggage with them. The men were not sent to work, and the children even had a school permitted them, under the supervision of Fredy Hirsch (Maccabee of Prague), and there was free permission to write. True, they were harassed in a scandalous way by their Lageräl tester, a Reichs German professional criminal by the name of Arno Böhm, one of the biggest gangsters in the camp. Our puzzlement was intensified when we once caught sight of the official designation of this transport, the inscription of which read:

'SB-Transport of Czech Jews with six months of Quarantine.'

"We knew very well what 'SB' (Sonderbehandlung) meant, but could not understand the method of handling, especially the long quarantine of six months, since the longest term of quarantine in our modest experience had never exceeded three weeks. We were perplexed. But the closer the six-month quarantine came to its end, the more we were convinced that the fate of these Jews would also end in the gas chambers. We explained to them how matters stood for them, and what awaited them. Some of them, especially Fredy Hirsch, who evidently had the confidence of his camp companions, told us that if our fears proved founded they would organize resistance.

"The people in the Sonderkommando told us that, if the Czech Jews would take up their defense, they would join them. Some believed that in this way a general revolt could be staged in the camp. On March 6, 1944, we learned that the crematoria were being prepared to receive the Czech Jews. I hurried to Fredy Hirsch to inform him of this and urged him to act, for they had nothing to lose. He replied to me that he knew what his duty was. Before evening I crept again to the Czech camp and there learned that Fredy Hirsch lay dying. He had poisoned himself with luminal. The next day, March 7, 1944, he was carried unconscious, with his 3,791 fellow prisoners who had come with him to Birkenau on September 7, 1943, in lorries to the crematoria. The young people went singing to their death. To our great disappointment, there had been no resistance. The men of the Sonderkommando, who had determined to join in the resistance, had waited in vain. Only eleven pairs of twins were left alive from these Jews. Different medical experiments were carried out on these children in Auschwitz. When we left Birkenau they were still living. Among those who were gassed, was also Rozsi Fürst from Sered.

"A week before the gassing, on March 1, 1944, all the inmates of the camp had to write to their relatives abroad how well they were getting on. The letters had to be given dates ranging from March 23 to March 25, 1944. They were ordered to request that parcels be sent them from relatives abroad."

Further reports on Terezín continue in the protocols on page 16. These begin with the further serial numbers that were tattooed on the inmates, from 165,000 to 168,000. These were the numbers given those transported in December 1943 from the Terezín ghetto:

"On December 20, 1943, another 5,000 Jews came from Terezín. The transport list had the same inscription as the one that had come in September 7: 'SB-Transport, Czech Jews with six months' quarantine.' After they had arrived, they were all put, men, women, and children, in the part of the camp where the September arrivals had been lodged. They also enjoyed the privileges their predecessors had had. Twenty-four hours before the first group was sent to the gas chambers, the second was put in the neighbouring quarters that happened to be empty at this time, and thus they were separated.

"They still are in the quarters they were moved to. After the first group had been gassed, there could be no doubt what was planned for them, and they are now preparing resistance. The organization of the resistance is being carried out by Růženka Laufschner and Hugo Lengsfeld both from Prague. They are gradually accumulating combustible material and are intending, in case the worst happens, to set fire to the blocks in their quarter. Their quarantine runs out on June 20, 1944."

This important protocol, which gave warning of what was happening, the report on the tragedy of the liquidation of the Czech family camp in Birkenau, also exposed it as an alibi. It compelled Dr. Kopecký, in Geneva, who represented the London government-in-exile, to take action. An important document, "Aktennotiz betreffend Birkenau und Auschwitz," about delivering the protocols to Dr. Kopecký was preserved. It was written June 23, 1944, by R. Lichtheim, representative of the Jewish Executive Committee in Geneva:

"The enclosed reports and letters were brought to Dr. Kopecký on about June 10 from Bratislava . . .

"2. Dr. Kopecký called Ullmann, as his official advisor in Jewish affairs, and gave him the material to look through and translate what was necessary. At the same time he tried several times to reach Schwalb, but the latter was absent and did not appear in Dr. Kopecký's office until some days later.

"3. On the basis of the reports concerning the deportation and murder of the first group of Czech Jews from Terezín, Dr. Kopecký telegraphed through the British Embassy to London, in order to stop the murder of the second group of deportees. This was the background for the information and warnings of the BBC between June 15 and June 20.

"Furthermore, Dr. Kopecký consulted with Dr. Ullmann and Dr. Riegner about the next steps to take. Copies of the reports were given to Mr. McClelland, who will send the English translations to America. An excerpt from the report was made and given to Dr. Kopecký in English, and he wants to telegraph this excerpt to London.

"There was another discussion between Dr. Kopecký, Dr. Ullmann, Dr. Riegner, and McClelland, then on June 23 a discussion in Dr. Schwarzenberg's office, in which Dr. Kopecký, Dr. Ullmann and Dr. Riegner took part, since in the meantime the Red Cross had received a query from London whether it was acquainted with the situation in Auschwitz-Birkenau.

"Further steps that are being considered are:

Intervention from the Pope.

Reprisals, especially bombing of the camp, in particular the crematoria and the railway lines for transporting the Jews from Terezín and Hungary.

"Dr. Kopecký will telegraph these proposals to his Goverment..."

A five-page excerpt[33] was made from the twenty-six-page report of the Auschwitz escapees, that was sent from Bratislava to Geneva. This Dr. Kopecký sent* to the Czechoslovak Government in London, with the request that it be delivered to the British Prime Minister and that the following proposal be made:

(1) The Allied Governments should issue a warning to the Germans and the Hungarians that they will use reprisals against the Germans living in the Allied countries.

(2) The camps of Auschwitz and Birkenau and especially the buildings containing the gas chambers and crematoriums recognizable by the high chimneys as well as the sentries around the railways and the watch towers and the industrial installations should be bombed from the air.

(3) The following main railway lines, which are used for the daily transports, should also be bombed.

(4) Without mentioning where this report comes from, the foregoing report should be given widest publicity by radio and newspapers, so that the Germans may know that the outside world is fully informed about their activities.

(5) The public warnings of the Allied Nations over the radio and on other occasions should be constantly repeated.

(6) The Holy See should be asked to issue a strong condemnation of these crimes.

Similar and even more extensive and emphatic campaigns were undertaken by representatives of various sections of the Jewish World Congress, which got in direct contact with the military general staffs of the Western Powers' command, with a representative of the Soviet Embassy, and with representatives of the Polish and Czechoslovak government-in-exile in London.[34]

(*) In the heading of the first page of the English report there is a handwritten note in German: "On about June 25, 1944, this excerpt was forwarded by Kopecký to London and by McClelland to America."

[1] *Goebels Tagebücher aus den Jahren 1942/43*, Zürich 1948, entry for May 8, 1943, p. 324 ff.

[2] *Hefte von Auschwitz*, 6/1962, p. 60.

[3] O. Kraus—E. Kulka, *Beit Charoser L'mavet Auschwitz*, Jerusalem 1960, pp. 156—167. O. Kraus—E. Kulka, *Továrna na smrt* (*Death Factory*), Praha 1946, Autobiographically written up also in the recently published book by R. Vrba, A. Bestic, *I Cannot Forgive*, London 1963, p. 180 ff.

[4] Each prisoner wore a coloured triangle, the colour showing the group he belonged to: red—political, green—criminal, black—asocial, pink—homosexual, violet—Bible scholar. Jewish prisoners wore, in addition to this triangle, another yellow one that was placed on the first to form with it a six-pointed Star of David.

[5] H. G. Adler, *Die verheimlichte Wahrheit* (The Hidden Truth), Tübingen 1958, pp. 307—8.

[6] Correspondence of the German Red Cross, Auslandsdienst, Yad Washem Archives, J. M. 1700, Microfilm Reel 4.

[7] *Hefte von Auschwitz*, *op. cit.*, pp. 84—5.

[8] Kraus—Kulka, *op. cit.*, p. 159.
Cf. correspondence of German Red Cross, Yad Washem Archives, *op. cit.*

[9] Originals of the cards in the Yad Washem Archives.

[10] Yad Washem Archives, op. cit. For example, on January 4, 1944, Niehaus—Eichmann and on January 26, 1944, Eichmann's answer. These documents bearing Eichmann's signature were not available at the time of his trial. Dr. Baruch Ophir of Yad Washem, Jerusalem, drew my attention to the existence of this material in connection with the sending of food parcels to Terezín.

[11] H. G. Adler, *Theresienstadt 1941—1945*, Tübingen 1960, p. 164 ff.

[12] H. G. Adler, *Die verheimlichte Wahrheit*, Tübingen 1958, p. 312 ff.

[13] Kraus—Kulka, *op. cit.*, p. 162 ff.

[14] Archives of the State Museum of Auschwitz, cf. also chronologium Auschwitz, published texts.

[15] Text of telegram from the Auschwitz Gestapo preserved under the original number 2284/4 in the Archives of the State Museum in Auschwitz. Photostat in the Yad Washem Archive c7/4-2-6.

[16] The resistance organization headed by Col. Weidmann carried out acts of sabotage in the Pilsen region during the Nazi occupation. Vítězslav Lederer was a member of this group. In connection with its activity he was arrested in 1940, imprisoned, and transferred to the Small Fortress in Terezín from the ghetto. As a "Geheimnisträger" (one who knew state secrets), for he had been in the labor squad that took part in the liquidation of Lidice, he was deported to Birkenau in December 1943. Cf. entries on a survey of the activity of the partisan squad 28 "Plzeňák", pp. 1—9. Copy in Yad Washem Archives c7/4-2-6. Cf. also *Věstník ŽNO*, Praha, vol. IX, 1946, No. 2, p. 20, Leo Holzer, "Hasičský sbor v terezínském ghetu" (Fire-fighting Brigade in the Terezín Ghetto).

[17] After Berlin was bombed in 1943, these archives were transferred to Terezín. A list and description of the archives are part of the Record in the Report on the Activity of Partisan Squad 28 "Plzeňák", pp. 10—12. Among other things, the archives contained a list of members of the espionage services of foreign states, who were active in Europe. Cf. also H. G. Adler, *Die verheimlichte Wahrheit*, p. 270.

[18] SS Rottenführer Viktor Pestek, who was wounded and returned to Auschwitz, was beaten to death a few days later during questioning. Cf. testimony of Josef Neumann, imprisoned in connection with Pestek's flight. Kraus—Kulka, *op. cit.*, pp. 59—62. Cf. testimony of E. Kulka in the trial of Auschwitz criminals, Frankfurt am Main, 37th day of the trial, April 16, 1964.

[19] Testimony recorded by Vítězslav Lederer in April 1961, in Prague, for publication in the Jewish Yearbook, Praha, 1962/63.
Original text in the private archives of Erich Kulka, Praha. Cf. also O. Kraus—E. Kulka, *Massenmord und Profit* (Mass Murder and Profit), Berlin 1963, pp. 180—190.

[20] Sentence pronounced in the trial of Karl Rahm in Litoměřice, LSP 441/47, p. 27, Yad Washem Archives 07

[21] Text of the Gestapo's telegram preserved under original number 21 in the archives of the State Museum in Oswiecim (Auschwitz).

[22] Testimony of Walter Rosenberg—Rudolf Vrba and Alfred Wetzler—pen name Josef Láník—written down in years 1956—1960. In private archives of Erich Kulka in Prague. Cf. also Josef Láník, *Osvětím, hrobka štyroch miliónov ľudí* (Auschwitz, the grave of Four Million People), Košice 1945, and, by the same author, *Čo Dante nevidel* (What Dante Never Saw), Bratislava 1964. Also, R. Vrba—A. Bostic, *I Cannot Forgive*, London 1963. For more details, Kraus—Kulka, *Massenmord und Profit* (Mass Murder and Profit), Berlin 1963, pp. 180 ff.

[23] Testimony of Mr. Karmil-Krasňanský taken on June 8, 1964. Archives of the Institute for the History of Contemporary Jewry,

[24] Jerusalem, p. 4.
The Auschwitz protocols were first published in a series: "The Annihilation of the Jews in Poland", under the heading, "The Death Camps", Geneva, August 1944, pp. 106—108.

[25] Testimony of Karmil-Krasňanský, *op. cit.*, pp. 3—7.

[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 7—8

[28] Description of escape according to testimony written down by Arnošt Rosin and Czeslav Mordovič, both of Bratislava, in 1958—1960. Private Archives of E. Kulka, Praha.

[28] Karmil-Krasňanský, *op. cit.*, pp. 11—13.

[29] Cf. Kraus—Kulka, *Noc a mlha* (Night and Fog), Praha 1957, p. 383.

[30] Eugen Lewai, *Black Book of the Martyrdom of Hungarian Jewry*, Vienna 1948, p. 175.

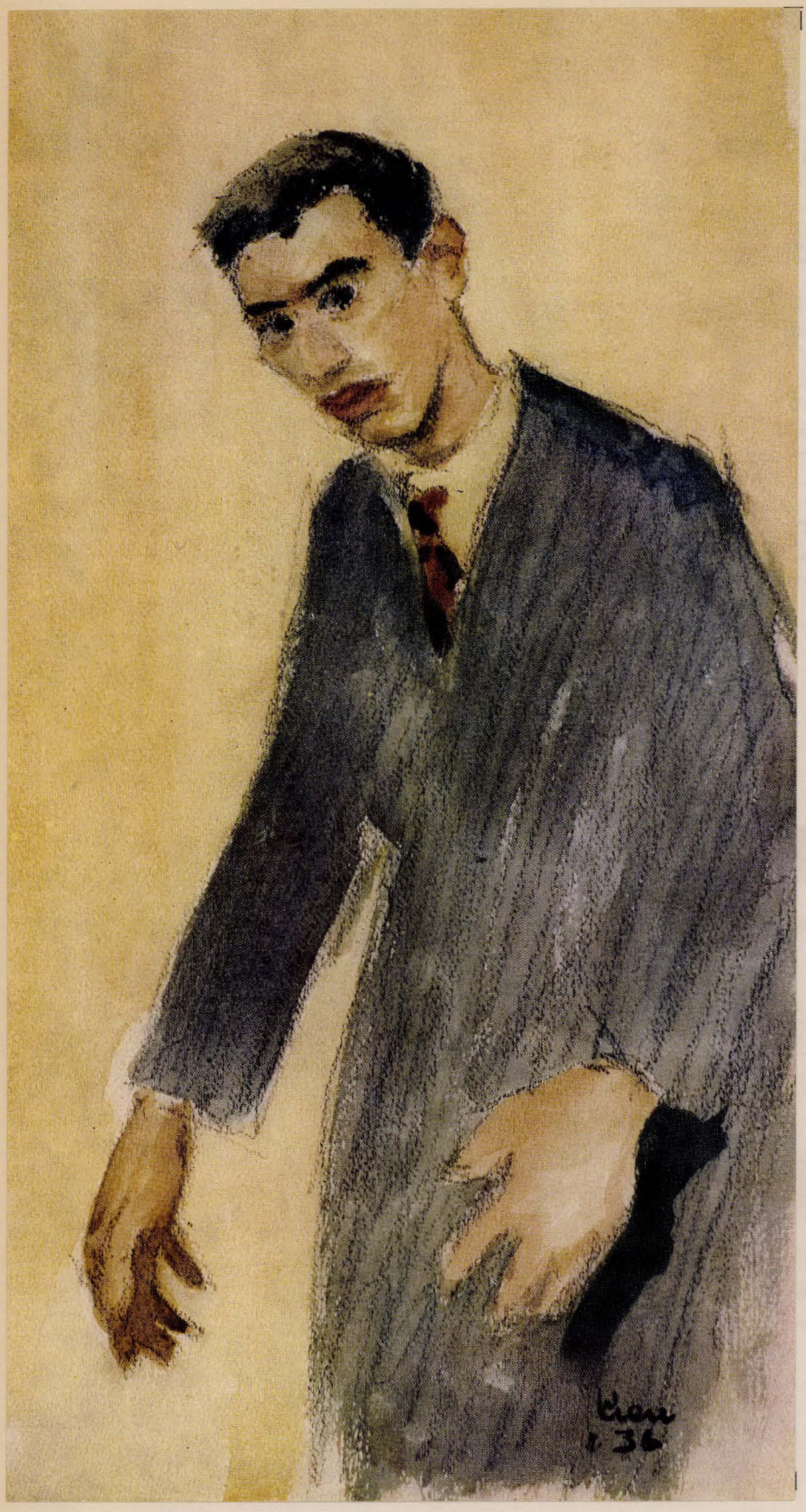
[31] *Ibid.*, p. 228.

[32] The list of names in this transport is given in the Deportation Lists, in Central Archives for the Czech Lands, Prague.

[33] Photostatic copy of letter deposited in Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, L 22—223/1.

[34] *Unity in Dispersion, a History of the World Jewish Congress*, New York, 1948, pp. 167 ff.





CHAPTER VII

CULTURE ON THE THRESHOLD OF DEATH

CULTURE IN THE ANTEROOM TO HELL
Dr. Norbert Frýd

THEATRE AND CABARET IN THE GHETTO OF TEREZÍN / Jana Šedová

MUSICAL EVENTS IN TEREZÍN 1942 / Arnošt Weiss

MEMORIES / Karel Berman

MUSIC IN TEREZÍN / Karel Ančerl

GIDEON KLEIN / Truda Solarová

RANDOM REMINISCENCES ABOUT A NOBLE MAN
Alena Synková

BRUNDIBÁR / Rudolf Franěk

FIRE-FLIES / Vava Šanová

THE CENTRAL GHETTO LIBRARY IN THE CONCENTRATION CAMP TEREZÍN / Dr. Emil Utitz

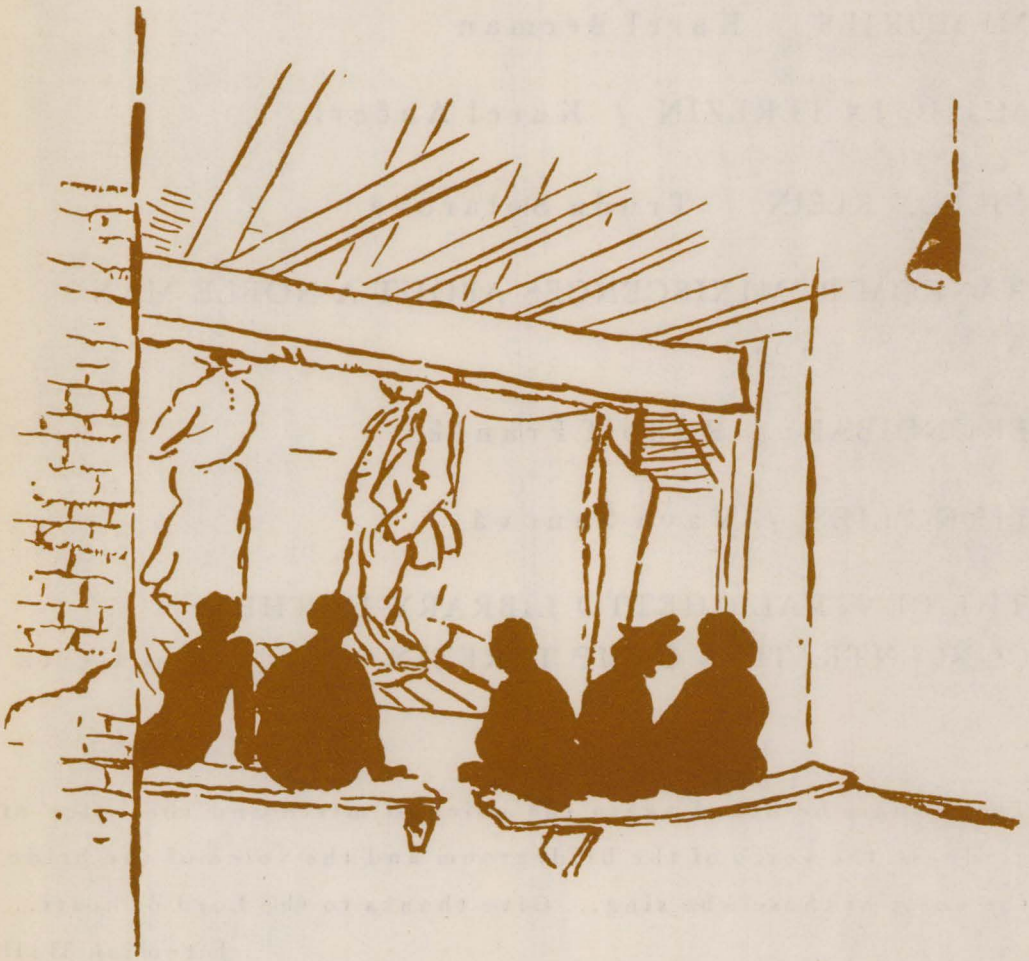
There shall be heard again the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who sing... Give thanks to the Lord of hosts...

Jeremiah 33 : 11

Dr. NORBERT FRÝD

CULTURE IN THE ANTEROOM TO HELL

(To the memory of Helen, "Esther" of Terezín)



TEREZÍN was bad enough, but of the three concentration camps I had to go through, it was the most bearable. Auschwitz-Birkenau could not be compared to anything; it consisted mainly of filth, barbed wire, a few miserable horse stalls—it was all a temporary annex to the more solid gas chambers and crematoria. Dachau-Kaufering was supposed to be a slave camp to provide labour for Bavarian military construction (Moll, Holzmann, and other construction firms), but it collapsed under the burden of lice, typhus and general exhaustion, even before the war ended. Terezín was quite different, at least during the sixteen months I spent there in 1943-4. Terezín, in the first place, was located in Bohemia, that is, in the home country of most of its active inhabitants. It was an abnormal municipal community, yet one that functioned somehow, with a population of 50,000: men, women, children; even though the majority could not live together, still they could see each other regularly; there were limited legal connections with the surrounding world, and also illegal ones, extremely risky and yet not completely cut off; there was at least a kind of self-government that could manipulate their scanty resources so that, for instance, children had preference; the work was not too hard, and most of it had a purpose, and this was of decisive importance (people were employed as bakers, mechanics, agricultural labourers, children's attendants, etc.); there were doctors who helped to make life bearable under unfavourable circumstances; and there was culture.

Culture and civilization are not directly linked. In the midst of war we lived in a concentration camp that was barbarously invented and barbarously kept going, we were packed in like cattle, slept in miserable three-tier bunks, ate our rations mostly standing, from tin utensils, relieved ourselves in stinking latrines, lived in constant fear of transports to gas chambers. But every day there was illegal education of children, every day there were theatre performances, concerts, lectures, every day news came from outside and was rapidly and dependably spread further, and every day there was tenacious confidence that nothing could subdue.

The hunger to take part in cultural undertakings was certainly no less abnormal than the structure of the whole ghetto society. There was something of a morose greatness in it. It would not be going too far to take it as a measure of the unbroken will to live. But we must not forget that there were also objective conditions that made possible a proliferation of culture that would be unthinkable in Dachau or Auschwitz.

What the Nazis might have had in mind in leaving Terezín for a long while as an exceptional place, the other authors in this book will probably analyze. I presume that at first it was an experiment that was not carried out consistently, temporarily as a showpiece for the Red Cross Commission, and later as a possible sluice gate for the planned export of Jews in return for payments from abroad. However that may be: education was prohibited, but certain cultural arrangements were allowed under the name of "Freizeitgestaltung." In fact they were compulsory. A music pavilion had to be built, a "café" had to function with music, cabaret and theatre in the German language were permitted. A few requisitioned pianos and other instruments that had belonged to Jews were sent from Prague collection points to Terezín, scores were also available. There was no want of literature, for there was practically no one who had not brought at least one book in the fifty kilograms allowed him.

Professional musicians, actors, and singers brought their repertoire with them, and there were even some amateurs, friends of art, who did the same. They hoped to get some good from the forced disruption of their former way of earning their bread, thinking that from now on they would be able to devote themselves more than before to their artistic inclinations.

What I have just said—these people were, after all, on their way to a concentration camp!—might sound insane. These art-lovers did seem, indeed, to be a bit mad, but their madness had understandable features.

Just as there are fish that are suited to the high pressure of great depths and that explode if one tries to pull them up, so there were also institutions of the old bourgeois society that did not survive the lifting of external pressure. Marriages that were not stable internally, fell immediately in ruins in Terezín—the economic pressure that had held them together no longer existed. Men, women, and children were put in separate barracks, each received his own food card issued to him personally, money was not without value, but it had fundamentally changed in importance; table, bed, roof were no longer shared; this was often stimulated by a feeling that the world was coming to an end, by a desire to "enjoy" things while one could—marriages that withstood Terezín were genuine marriages.

The same was true of the professions. How many people before the war actually did what they liked to do? I have seen intellectuals who sighed a sincere sigh of relief when they were able, relatively without worries, to do some simple manual work.

The 1930's were bad years of crisis. Besides the financial cares, the impending war burdened all thinking minds, then Hitler's seemingly irresistible triumph from 1933 on, the catastrophe of democratic Spain after 1936, the "Anschluss" of Austria in 1938—everything combined to increase nervousness long before Czechoslovakia was occupied and the "final solution to the Jewish problem" became a reality here. Whoever spent the early 1940's in the relative "liberty" of the Protectorate had ruined nerves. The concern over imprisoned and deported family members, the endless difficulty in scraping up food for one's own consumption and on top of that for sending parcels, the numberless malicious decrees, limitations, prohibitions that never could be observed if one wanted to live—all this, together with the very justified fear of transport and death camps, gave the moment when one entered Terezín almost a sense of momentary relief from all that had gone before.

Weren't we "in a camp"? Hadn't the feared break with the old way of life already come about? Hadn't "the worst" already happened? Many of the former troubles no longer had substance. The sending of parcels, for instance, could from now on be left to those back home to worry their heads over.

A person who had felt for ages that the legal profession was getting on his nerves had nothing to do here but keep a sort of symbolic contact with the old routine.

I know a lawyer who had always wanted to be a puppeteer. Ironically, Hitler made this possible for him. He founded an outstanding puppet theater for a children's home in Terezín, threw himself into this work as he never had before, stayed with it, even after the war's end would have enabled him to return to his own profession. Now he is a university professor in the field of puppet theatre, enjoying renown throughout the world...

This was no exceptional case, in fact I might call it typical. It shows in a fortunate

The theatre
(Otto Ungar)

way, even to the post-war happy end, what went on within many people. Discontent with the old world changed into a—perhaps at that time mad—hope that the total dissolution of the past would make possible a leap into something new, something that would make for greater happiness. It was not just my world that went under before my eyes. The sentence had been pronounced on the whole old order that had made a Hitler possible. With victory over this barbarity, something absolutely new had to come. According to their political maturity, people had differing ideas of what "new" meant, but all the ideas had this common motive force: one imagined oneself free in the new life, one would live as one liked, make oneself useful, read a lot, listen to music, travel, and never again allow oneself to be burdened by merely earning one's bread . . . so the fairy tale went.

Terezín was not an unsuitable point of transition between the definitively terminated past and the uncertain, but not hopeless, future. The end of the war was in sight (the whole six years it was continually "in sight"), the old had closed up shop, only the new was possible. The will to live, the rope-dancing ability to find some sort of balance in the most unstable situation, made Terezín 1943 seem like a tragicomic Inferno, in which many suffered and died, but in which all was still possible—or, rather, in which everything was again possible.

The classic star-shaped garrison city of Joseph II (by the way, is there anything more grimly comic than a fortress that had never seemed worth the effort for any conqueror to try to besiege it?) had the sober lines of the Age of Enlightenment (the 1780's). The blocks of houses were set strictly at right angles, huge barracks alternated with low dwellings: everything was lucidly arranged, but in an official, utilitarian grey. After evacuating the former population, the longitudinal and lateral streets were numbered in order and every building could be located by means of a letter and a number. Where about 8,000 people had lived, now over 50,000 had to manage. Furthermore, a large part of the town was taken up for the needs of the SS—the camp command, all kinds of officers' quarters, the enormous Sudeten barracks were turned into archives when everything was snuggling down into the ghetto in the hope of being saved from air attacks.

What was left of the town swarmed with people. I had the experience that food spoiled much faster in concentration camp than elsewhere—the atmosphere was saturated with decay. The population seemed markedly older than would be true of a normal town; the transports rolled in uninterruptedly, bringing the last of the aged who had stayed in the German Reich. There were relatively few children, almost no newborn infants, abortions were compulsory.

The only means of transportation in the town were worn-out hearses that had belonged to the former religious communities and had been gathered here. Old people, living and dead, were carried in the hearses, but also bread, horse meat, potatoes—everything—went into these once pompous, now decrepit, carriages, pulled by men hitched to them as draft animals.

In the fortifications many places used as lodgings had grass growing on the roof—they looked as comfortless and ruined as their ill inmates. Mental institution, infirmary for incurables, delousing bath, sick bay—this was the actual core of the ghetto. The fluctuating working population, the young people whose work kept the whole thing

going, whose hopes gave meaning to life, were in the minority, but they determined everything.

It was mainly thanks to these young people that active cultural enterprises thrived.

The old people lived in their memories. There was an overabundance of commemorative lectures, the more than ten a *day* in the official program testified to this fact; these people would have become ill if they had not been allowed to tell about what they had been in former life. (Surely you have heard the joke about the dachshund who kept on telling about what a gigantic St. Bernard he had been at home?)

At the same time, there really were people with something worthwhile to relate. University professors, actors, engineers, writers—one example can serve for many: Mrs. Auředníček, with her recollections of the Hilsner trial and the Vienna of old Austria.

This section of the "Freizeitgestaltung" was headed by the philosopher Emil Utitz, former president of Rostock University, himself a witness of many interesting happenings, an ideologist of German expressionism and schoolmate of Franz Kafka.

Quite different was the lecture program oriented more on youth—and in Terezín these were mainly young Czech people. It was a substitute for school, and also constructive work looking toward the future.

Before I continue, I should make brief mention of the political situation within the ghetto.

Originally, perhaps, designed as a collection point for all European Jews before sending off to the East, Terezín really did have members of many different nations. Besides the Czechs and Reichsdeutsche, there were Austrians Dutch, Danish, and others. But the core of the active population was made up always of people from Bohemia and Moravia. Their views prevailed.

The official ruling stratum consisted of Zionists. Opposed to them were on the one side the Czech national bourgeois, and on the other the Communists who could not, true, come out openly as such, but whose influence was felt everywhere.

A typical representative of the Zionist trend was Jacob Edelstein, at one time Judenältester (Mayor of the ghetto), a Social Democrat with a good head for practical questions. Zionist Otto Zucker was more inclined to an upper bourgeoisie, power-politics approach, but he had much interest in art and cultural matters. The Czech national bourgeois group was characterized by the former bank people from the Petschek circle, but they had their cultural protégés, for instance, the former Legation Councillor Kamil Hoffmann ("legal fun councillor" was the pun he liked to use for his title). Understandably, the Communists could not be open representatives in the leadership of the ghetto, but worked mostly indirectly, supported by the sympathies of many members of the apparatus.

This division into three was reflected also in the cultural activity. The youth homes, for instance, were officially supervised by the Zionists, but the influence of Czech literature and of communist ideology were especially effective here. As example let us name two of the most popular lecturers, Gustav Schorsch and Josef ("Pepek") Taussig.

Gustav Schorsch was a blond, asthenic prophet type of young man, with a very prominent nose (his expression, eyes, color of hair brought to mind pictures of the young

Schiller) whom the young people could listen to, by the hour, fascinated. He illustrated his speeches with various texts, Czech translations of the verse of Jehan Rictus, passages from Thomas Wolfe's *Look Homewards, Angel*, or recited in an especially moving way Christ's Sermon on the Mount, together with the best of the new Czech poetry (such as Halas). His appearances glowed with the personal ascetism of a fanatical lover of beauty and he had the deepest effect on his public. His austerity, his apolitical, or even antipolitical feeling had also an additional tinge of the bitter, of the painfully passive.

Pepek Taussig was the opposite pole from Schorsch. With just as brilliant an intellect and rhetorical ability, he was dark, almost laughably tall, handsome, with an inextinguishable, unforgettable cheerfulness. He was a Communist agitator, always—inclined to youthful pranks, popular and shrewd. He also spoke to the young people about literature, but had me recite Nikolai Gogol in connection with his talks, the famous passage where he describes the Russian troika rushing forward into the land, or Charles de Coster's *Ulenspiegel*, with his wild hatred of the occupying forces. And then he quoted often from Hašek's *Good Soldier Schweik*, the classic book of the Czech resistance to militarism, force, and bureaucratic idiocy.

It was Pepek's plan—and he was working on the manuscript—to write a new "Schweik." It was to be the story of an innocent Praguite who got in the wrong queue when he went to pay his dog tax at the municipal offices, had a J (for Jew) stamped on his identity card and from then on had to swim along in the stream of Jews through all the difficulties in the Terezín ghetto.

Pepek Taussig is dead, his Schweik was unfortunately not preserved for us. Gustav Schorsch is also dead, but we shall have more to say about him later. Thanks to him the Terezín theatre gave some of the most interesting performances.

The theatre in Terezín deserves, as a matter of fact, more than just one chapter devoted to it. Perhaps someone will write a book about it? All accomplishments in the field of culture had great variety, but nothing gave more precious or meaningful fruit than the theatre.

The theatre was the first born. As early as the heroic days of 1941, when the building command group arrived, when the former population still lived in Terezín and the Jewish prisoners (at first only the men) were not allowed to leave their prison-barracks, a cabaret came into being. Its creator was Karel Schwenk. And, as so often happens, the first was the best and remained so to the end. His cabaret lived, grew, took actresses into the ensemble when the women emerged, and created the only Terezín play, "The Last Cyclist," which was performed in Prague after the liberation. Its plot is based on the old saying that "The Jews and the cyclists are responsible for all harm done."

Schwenk was above all a big clown. From a non-intellectual background, standing wherever he was put, awkward, ridiculous, but good, disarming, unmasking the evil enemy with just a look—that was his basic image. He had the big, sadly smirking eyes of an ancient arch fellow who is always the victim of the slicker and more ruthless types, but who will have to survive these slicker types in the end, whether it suits him or not. And he had such bushy, tangled eyebrows, "perverse eyebrows," as a fascist demagogue expressed it in his play, who wanted to make him responsible for the corruption of all the young girls of other races . . .

Schwenk was of the Chaplin tribe. Like the master, he was granted the gift of being able to do everything himself. The play, the lyrics for the songs, the music, the main role, he managed everything and in the end appeared so innocent, modest, so pushed aside and never pushing others.

According to his own firm conviction, Schwenk was a Communist. He was a rather melancholy Communist—there are such. He was the most popular man of the theatre in Terezín. Without being able to write a note, he composed the sole authentic ghetto anthem: "Všecko jde, když se chce, za ruce se vezmeme . . ." (Where there is a will, there is a way, let us join hands . . .) The last words of the anthem were ". . . on the ruins of the ghetto we will laugh." The laughter—should anyone be capable of it—he himself, alas, did not live to see. Deported, like most of us, to a death camp, he died in the days of the Hitler Reich collapse, on the way home.

With him perished his friend and best co-worker, Jiří Süssland, better known under the name Zeileis. Zeileis was one of those who, like Schwenk, had done some theatre work before the war. While Schwenk stumbled onto the stage among the amateurs in the "Club of Unused Talent," Zeileis was apprentice in a famous theatre, E.F. Burian's "D". True, he had no great roles until he was in Terezín. He also, cook by profession, was rather a melancholy type. His comic affinity for a ridiculous corpulence, together with his indecisiveness, made him a dreadfully funny figure as Podkolesin in Gogol's "The Marriage."

Another cabaret, which was devoted more to topical events going on in the camp, was established by Josef Lustig; he also played interludes in front of the curtain, with his friend Spitz, in loyal imitation of the Prague actors Voskovec and Werich. The music of their "Liberated Theatre," composed by Ježek, was also taken over and used with new lyrics.

Such pieces were necessary, contributing a good deal to making the atmosphere in the camp bearable. Besides, the criticism in them helped to keep the little dictators of the ghetto in leash, and mobilized general laughter against them. Along with these and other productions that originated in the camp (e.g., Zdeněk Jelínek's "Play About the Trap," Petr Kühn's "Marionettes") there was, of course, a repertoire taken from "outside". Jiří Strass, Vlasta Schönová, Irena Dodalová, Ota Růžička directed several productions such as Chekhov's "The Courting," Čapek's "Love's Fateful Play," Langer's "A Camel Goes through the Needle's Eye," Štech's "The Third Bell," Molière's "George Dandin," Wolker's "Grave," and a dramatization of Villon's Ballads. Plays were also studied that never went so far as their premiéres, for the eternal transports intervened.

Despite all difficulties, however, an absolutely splendid theatre life was built up and continued until late in 1944.

We have mentioned the fact that the German cabaret and theatre were approved by the camp command. I do not know how well informed the SS were about the Czech production that excelled the German, not only in numbers, but also in artistic performance, up-to-date atmosphere, and political effectiveness. At first it was illegal, and later became an undertaking that was merely suffered. In Terezín the SS simply did not interfere too much in internal matters. They were much more interested in the functioning of the "sluices" and the transports, in pre-

venting attempts at escape and in uninterrupted operation directed toward Auschwitz.

True, there was internal censorship. Once the Council of Elders found Schwenk's "The Last Cyclist" too bold; another time, there was Zionist opposition to the old folklore play, "Esther"—their objection was that it laid it on too thick about the Czech country people's friendliness towards Jews. Nevertheless, daring performances were put on, and I know of no mishaps in production. Graphic artists did have to pay heavily for the courage they had had to make sketches of reality in Terezín. Fritta (Fritz Taussig) and Leo Haas were sent, because of their work as painters, to the feared Small Fortress; there Fritta perished. It seemed that the SS were afraid of the smuggling out of such paintings, while they had little against a theatre that could not penetrate beyond the ghetto walls.

And so it happened that Czech was played and sung on several stages and that a great deal of time, energy and material went into the theatre, to an extent that is hard to explain today.

Of special importance was the assistance of a splendid stage designer, the architect František Zelenka, who had worked in the "Liberated Theatre" in Prague and who now put all his ebullient resourcefulness at the service of Terezín theatre. Most of the stages were located in barracks garrets, which in itself created a fantastic atmosphere. There were two-storey-high roof supports made of gigantic 150-year-old beams. Feeble rays from the spotlights gleamed spectrally through the dusty room, turned the rags hung on a rope into grotesque curtains, transformed the dirt into a cosy atmosphere of a stable . . . Here the famous German actor Kurt Gerron had indeed a more authentic backdrop for his "Beggars' Opera" interpretation than he had ever had in Berlin.

Zelenka made use of what he had for these stages, intensified the scene by emphasizing the slovenliness (as in Gogol's "Marriage"), or by the exclusive use of materials that were characteristic of the ghetto (beaverboard, straw, tin cans, etc.). The costumes for Esther, for example, were made out of the linen bed sheets that the dead had left behind. They were brightly colored and cut in fringes as children do folded paper, so that the roughly frazzled, gaily pitiable result was a little like lace. The King was adorned with a chain made of empty liver paste cans, the tassels on the herald's clothing were made of shavings.

With such witty props and with actors like Zeileis, František Miška, Jana Šedová and others, Gustav Schorsch, himself a pupil of Dostál in the National Theatre in Prague, was able to carry out his ideas in masterly fashion: a yawning, complaining Gogol, the grotesque tedium of a soiled feather bed, the annihilating criticism of the helpless stupidity of human animals.

But the Terezín stages could also have a cheerful and light effect. We have already spoken about the late Baroque folklore play "Esther." E. F. Burian had prepared a new production of this piece and nothing seemed at that time more appropriate than testimony to the sympathy that the Czech country people had shown for biblical material. In the play Haman wants to extirpate the Jews, the beautiful Esther thwarts his plans and in the end brings him to the gallows. It is understandable that such a play could not be put on after the Protectorate had been imposed. I had worked earlier for Burian, managed to get a script, brought it

with me to Terezín and put on the première here. My helper in this was the composer Karel Reiner who had been a member of Burian's ensemble for many years. He now wrote the music for "Esther." Karel Berman, today a singer and opera director of the National Theatre, conducted. We had Zelenka's wonderful stage décor, even a former choreographer from Prague, Kamila Ronová, to assist us. Furthermore, there were good actors from Schorsch's seminar and some gifted newcomers—to have such conditions for making a theatre was good even in Terezín.

In the field of drama the greatest success was gleaned by Gogol's "Marriage." but in number of performances it was excelled by far by the children's "Brundibár."

In the latter, using Zelenka' stage designs Rafael Schächter, formerly Burian's assistant and one of the most distinguished artists in the cultural life of the ghetto, inspired the performance. The opera was written by the Prague composer Hans Krása, to the text by Adolf Hoffmeister. Krása, a cultivated and gentle person, like Zelenka and Schächter, did not survive to the end of the war.

In Terezín, "Brundibár" was one of the things one had to see. Thousands heard its melodies, hundreds of children experienced in the rehearsals and the performances the strongest impressions of their short lives.

Transport followed transport, the director Rudolf Franěk constantly had to find new players for the roles. All the theatre groups of the ghetto could post honour rolls of their dead members—the number who never came back exceeded the number of living by far. But who could count the dead children from "Brundibár"?

To make a dry summary, we might say that the Terezín theater was a worthy chapter in the general history of Czech theatre. All the progressive currents of the pre-war period were cultivated and developed further here. Schwenk followed the tradition of groups like "El-Car" and "Aragon," much of the good in the National Theatre tradition was represented by Schorsch, Josef Lustig's cabaret cultivated the style of Voskovec and Werich, the "Villon" by Irena Dodalová and our "Esther" had E. F. Burian to thank for their best features.

The theatre of the ghetto was good Czech theatre. Its repertoire, in which native and Russian authors predominated, was not aimed solely at entertainment and bringing good cheer. It was indubitably a conscious protest against the fascist oppressor, a guidepost to a completely changed, free world of the future.

Rafael Schächter's name makes a natural transition to another chapter that extends beyond theatre life. Concerts were held with unbelievably full programs of high quality.

Schächter had the decisive word in musical matters, and he was also the first to venture a great undertaking. With soloists and chorus he studied the entire "Bartered Bride" by Smetana for a concert performance and directed the many presentations of this opera from the piano that had to replace the orchestra.

It is hard to describe the effect this national opera had on the audiences. I have aimed in this account to avoid all sentimentality, but it would be false reporting if I kept silent about how the people wept. Something in them realized: In this music we are at home, we must cling to it, in this atmosphere no gas chambers are possible, there is human dignity for us.

This is also how the effect of Smetana's great choral work "Czech Song" should be understood. Karel Ančerl prepared it and singers thronged to it, for this was also part of the above-described yearning to take part in cultural life. They sacrificed many hours after the ordinary working day, followed patiently all the instructions, sprang to replace people who had been sent away in transports, without being sure that they themselves would not be the next.

Karel Ančerl, today the head conductor of the Czech Philharmonic, was in Terezín a bouncy young cook. He also brought with him pre-war experience in the "Liberated Theatre," was a well-known interpreter of modern style. In Terezín he concentrated on serious and monumental music. He even succeeded in conjuring up a full string orchestra; its rendition of Dvořák's "String Serenade" and of Suk's "Meditation on the Saint Wenceslas Chorale" was among the most gripping that could be heard in the ghetto.

A great number of singers and virtuoso soloists gave individual concerts. The singers Hedda Gráb, Ada Schwarz, and Karel Berman presented arias from operas and lieder. Berman, by the way, also studied for performance the ravishingly beautiful "Moravian Duets" by Dvořäk, with a girls' chorus. The pianist Alice Sommer-Herz I heard give the best rendition of all the Chopin etudes on one evening—an astonishing achievement. Other well-known pianists were Filipa Steiner and Juliette Arányi. Politically oriented and truly fascinating was the interpretation of Mussorgski's "Pictures at an Exhibition," as presented by Bernard Kaff, a distinguished pianist from Brno. When the bells began to boom in "The Gate to Kiev," it seemed that the liberating army was near.

Gideon Klein, one of the most attractive personalities of the former Prague and then the Terezín musical life, performed also as pianist. My memory clings especially to his intelligent, guiding participation in chamber music groups that played Dvořák, Brahms and others. His partners were the violinists Fröhlich and Kling (both in the United States today), with Pollak as cellist. The first violin recitals were given by Egon Ledeč, a leading member of the pre-war Philharmonic.

Gideon Klein was a composer, too, as was the pupil of Janáček, Pavel Haas, whose Terezín songs were performed. We have already spoken of the work of Karel Reiner, who also devoted a good deal of time to working with children. Other composers were Viktor Ullmann, who had been a pupil of Schönberg and Krása, the creator of "Brundibár."

Performances of Mozart's "Bastien and Bastienne" were given for children (prepared by Jochowitz), and the general public had popular favorites like "Carmen." Besides, opera was a field where the German artists did much good work, in addition to the cabaret which had stars like Kurt Gerron and the Hofer-Frey couple.

The Dutch provided an excellent singer by the name of Gobbez and also had the best jazz band.

The violinist Ota Sattler and Wolfi Lederer's orchestra were popular interpreters of light music.

The lecture program, the theatre, music — this far from exhausts the riches of the abnormal cultural life of the abnormal town. We have already spoken about the painters. Of course, their work could not be exhibited, but everyone knew about it

and honoured it, many were possessed with the idea of preserving these documents of an existence unworthy of human beings so the world that would come afterwards could learn of it.

This is the only way to explain the fact that, despite the danger connected with the undertaking, so many drawings, whole folders, were saved, walled in, buried. The pictures by Fritta, Fleischmann, Haas, Ungar, Aussenberg, and all the others, are authentic documents of the time.

Recently I had the task of rendering some of these pictures comprehensible for the general public in a film commentary. It was not so simple. Just to say that things really looked like that in Terezín at that time is not enough. None of the pictures are photographically realistic. They incline towards grotesque expressionism, they are seemingly intent on showing crooked, crippled people, rubbish, again and again the mad hearses occupied by the aged living, with their legs bobbling down.

But that is exactly how it was, that is the core of the ghetto, of which I have already spoken—mad house, infirmary for the incurables, delousing bath, sick bay. That is what the painters saw first of all, what shocked them; that is what possessed them, but it also made them laugh in a sinister way, like a horrible death dance of this era. Many were taken by death, Fritta as direct punishment for his drawings. Ungar also, perhaps the most talented, lives no more—he was a painter with sombrely glimmering colours. Karel Fleischmann, a native son of my home town Budějovice, a gifted doctor who was also successful as painter and writer, stood only two paces from me during "selection" in Auschwitz, when his deformed shoulder was noticed and he was sent to the gas.

The Dutch had a lovable painter who had a different view of Terezín, finding it almost naively dainty. His name was Jo Spier—he was amusing, but the truth had to be learned from others.

The world knows about the hundreds of children's drawings, a greatly moving testimony to what the little people saw, did not see, or wished to see. Dreams of their parents' home, flowers, full plates . . . The film "Butterflies Do Not Live Here" made them famous throughout the world.

In addition to the drawings, these children also composed poems and nursery rhymes. A good deal of poetry was produced, and not just by the children. In their yearning to leave some trace behind them, many people took up a pen for the first time in their lives and began to put rhymes together, to write reminiscences, and to keep diaries.

There were professional writers, too, most of whom worked in the theatre or earned their bread in the Youth Care organization and elsewhere. The most famous of all was Karel Poláček; he did, it is true, come to the ghetto as an old man—not old in years, for he was only 51, but visibly tired, no longer able to fight.

Poláček enjoyed respect as one of the Čapek circle, as author of very successful humorous novels. The fame that was to come to him from his posthumous book, *There Were Five in the Gang*, was not yet granted to him, and his novels about the First World War were not fully appreciated at that time.

Any hope that he would write something for or about the ghetto soon proved unfounded. Dull of aspect, with the unhealthy redbrown skin of a heavy smoker who has difficulty in breathing, he moved slowly, spoke slowly, too, almost un-

certainly. His fingers trembled, he had no desire for any activity, he even wanted to have nothing to do with the saving of his own person.

His admirers in the Council of Elders had assigned him a private room soon after his arrival. This was a precious privilege—a tiny annex in the courtyard of a house, evidently a goat shed. One could enter only bent forward, and then immediately after entrance stumble over the only piece of furniture, a plank bed. Like the rest of us, Poláček wandered out at meal times, with the flat cap on his head, the bowl in his hand, spoon in his buttonhole, through the barracks yards. The cooks were young people, most of them—we have mentioned some—devoted to art. They knew Poláček and gave him good portions, so he did not have to suffer hunger.

A skeptical man and now very weary, he nevertheless agreed to give lectures when asked. His listeners were mostly elderly people who were also tired, looking back into the past. He spoke slowly and wisely about the novels of the Russian realists, or chose some general theme of current importance, such as "Human Intolerance." Twenty years have gone by, and I do not remember everything he said about this. But I often after the war quoted one of his ideas that seemed especially characteristic to me, and which I then was pleased to find in his recently published last diary. With his reddish brown cheeks, rather immobile, breathing slowly, he said: "Once I saw an old Bible picture. The Antichrist was about to pierce a saint through with his lance. The saint was sitting comfortably there, as if it had nothing to do with him. Formerly I used to think that the medieval painters were incapable of presenting feelings like fear, astonishment or pain, so it looked as if the saints had shown no interest in their own martyrdom. Now I understand the saints better: what could they do?"

Poláček got caught in the horrible machinery of the Second World War too late for him to make even a gesture of defence. He died October 1944 in the gas chambers—differing from the martyrs in the old pictures only in his way of death.

The younger people continued to carry on the fight. If there had been nothing else but the fact that thousands of children in Terezín had schooling despite the strict ban, that contact with the outer world was never broken off, that news and belief in a better future were spread about—this alone is testimony enough to how much the inmates of the ghetto clung to human existence and were worthy of it.

And the many lectures, theatre performances, concerts?

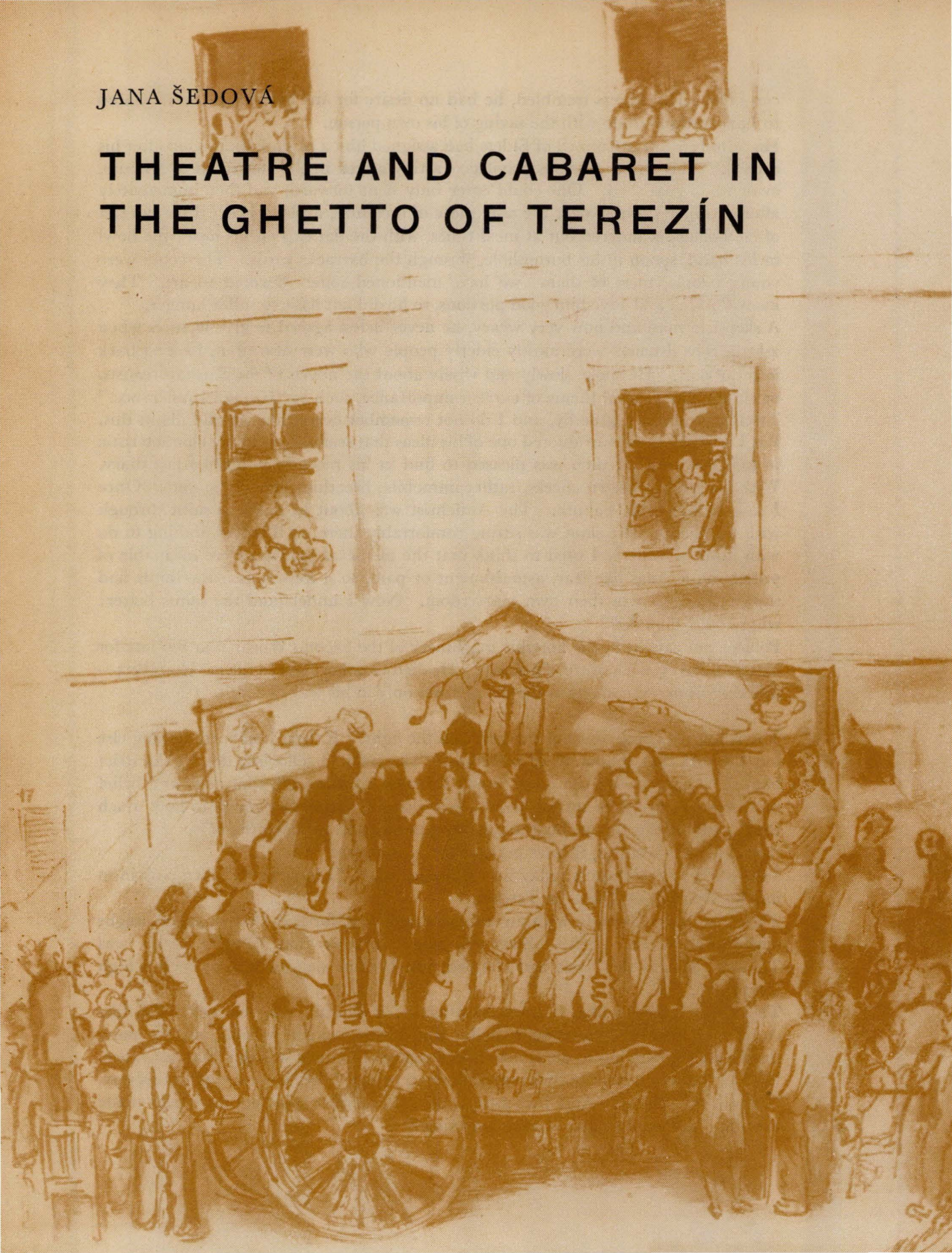
I still meet acquaintances today who whisper to me: "I have never taken part in so much culture in my life as in Terezín."

They say this, seemingly with an uneasy conscience, for fear that strangers might misunderstand the ghetto. Strangers might believe that Terezín really was Theresienbad, as the Nazis had claimed, just because culture was on such a high level there.

Therefore, I should like to stress here again: if Terezín was not hell itself, like Auschwitz, it was the anteroom to hell. But culture was still possible, and for many this frenetical clinging to an almost hypertrophy of culture was the final assurance. "We are human beings and we remain human beings," they were saying in this way, "despite everything! And if we must perish, the sacrifice must not have been made in vain. We want to give it some meaning!"

JANA ŠEDOVÁ

THEATRE AND CABARET IN THE GHETTO OF TEREZÍN



THE FESTIVE first night took place in the cellar of the "Sudeten" barracks.
There were no plush stalls.
The audience did not wear formal dress.
There was no rustling of candy paper bags. No refreshments were to be had in the buffet.
Applause was strictly forbidden.
It was not advisable to make unnecessary noise. The closing chorus of the evening sung by the spectators, together with the performers, sounded subdued but all the more enthusiastic. It ended with the words: "Where there is a will, there is a way. Let us join hands and one day we will laugh on the ruins of the Ghetto."
The ghetto, however, still stood firm at that time, as if it were to last till Judgment Day. It was the year 1942. Only a few weeks before, the Nazis had begun to send Jewish transports to the barracks of Terezín. And in a camp that was just a transit station on the way to the Auschwitz gas chambers, the prisoners had but little hope of seeing the day when they might laugh on the ruins of the ghetto. Karel Schwenk, the author of the song, had no intention of putting off laughing till the end of the war. To make the liberated prisoners laugh on the ruins of the ghetto would certainly have been easy—but now, in 1942, in a Nazi concentration camp, it was a much harder task, but all the more meritorious.
Schwenk's first cabaret achieved far more. It was satire in the true sense of the word. No misbehaviour in the camp escaped his biting wit. And the Nazi overlords were ridiculed in the same bold manner. There, however, the shortcomings could hardly be expected to disappear. Fortunately, the SS had no idea that they were being criticized on our stage.
But this made a stronger response to Schwenk's cabaret in the atmosphere of the men's prison. It improved not only the mood in general, but also morale, so easily undermined in camp.
The rumour about the success of the first Terezín première penetrated through the thick walls of the barracks into the women's prison. The imprisoned women of the "Dresden" barracks, however, could not be present at the next performance. The "Sudeten" barracks, only a few blocks away were as inaccessible for us women at that time, as if they had been situated at the other end of the world. There was nothing left for us to do, but to start our own, purely "feminine" culture.
The first women's cabaret, therefore, started its activities about two months later, in the attic, for a change. I was in charge of it, which was pure cheek on my part, for I had never seen a cabaret in my life. There had always been someone who forbade me to go. First, I had been too young, then my race not pure enough. And the same held good for my cast. In view of these circumstances, it was impossible for us, however much we tried, to attain the high professional level of Karel Schwenk's experienced ensemble. Fortunately, in one thing, at least, we did not lag behind: in speaking openly on the stage about the most burning problems in camp. And that was the main thing for our audience. The scenes that hit the nail straight on the head were always the most successful. In our case this was, as far as I can remember, the sketch about little Sarah who, after the liberation, was put into a mental home, because she had brought all her good "camp habits" back into civilized life.

It may seem that we unnecessarily endangered the lives of performers and audience alike. But at that time and place, risking one's life was an inseparable part of the prisoner's day. Death lurked at every step. A little more food, a letter, a cigarette, even a mere meeting between husband and wife, father and child, might mean death. Therefore acting in a play or watching it was no exceptional risk. Everybody being accommodated in the same barracks, mass attendance in the attic or the cellar could be arranged inconspicuously. We played without costumes or stage so that no traces of our secret activities might be left behind. We knew one another and were aware of whom we played for. The barracks gates were guarded: it was part of the duties of the watch to call out "German visit." The SS very likely had thought up this way of reporting to frighten the whole prison well in advance of their coming. They had no idea that in this way at the same time they insured the safety of the first illegal theatre in Terezín.

This was the situation when Thalia performed behind bars. At a later stage dramatic art was to become "ghettoized" together with us, and that changed the situation entirely.

The gates of the barracks opened. Now it was no longer possible to bring culture to a handful of friends. The ghetto was flooded with transports from all over Europe and the new arrivals needed a little optimism and encouragement even more than we did, the old experienced criminals. But to perform, in secret, for sixty thousand persons, would have been madness. The Terezín theatre seemed doomed.

In the meantime, a new cabaret was being prepared, much more pretentious than the two previous ones. It surpassed them in its boundless phantasy and the grotesqueness of its sense of humour. Production was taken over by the German Command itself, and the entire ghetto was to perform. An International Red Cross Commission had deigned to come and graciously consented to be present as audience. Details of this gala performance are sufficiently well known: a music pavilion, luxurious shop-window displays, a bank, pleasantly excited ghetto prisoners in white overalls, replete children . . . . The Nazis had a well developed sense for detail. They forgot nothing that might suitably have added to the put-up display of Terezín well-being. Naturally, the representatives of culture were not allowed to stay away.

The German Command's orders that a theatre ensemble should be formed for this purpose naturally affected only the German theatre.

And so Terezín received its official stage, and the position of its actors was not to be envied. Not only did they have to perform before the Red Cross Commission, but they also had the unpleasant duty of playing in a propaganda film about the Ghetto Paradise of Terezín. I do not want to disparage the work of our German colleagues in any way. They played under Nazi orders and control. The ad-libbing that they did risk under these circumstances meant real danger. However, they were not able to continue in the tradition of the fighting theatre as begun by the first ghetto ensembles.

That time the Council of Elders helped us. With their knowledge the Czech theatre took advantage of the permission granted the German theatre.

Such a semi-legal position was extremely favourable for the Czech theatre ensemble. They were partly covered, while preserving their internal freedom. The Command's

permission guaranteed the outer aspects of our activities, while the contents remained uncensored, exactly as it had been at the time when we had played secretly. This was no mean present for the actors as well as the audience.

Over night the Czech theatre became the darling of the ghetto. New theatre halls came into being in the attics, thanks to the devoted self-help of the ghetto inmates. František Zelenka, the designer, worked wonders in the way of stage property and costumes with sack-cloth, rags and paper. In the beginning we had some innocent texts ready to put in instead of the risky passages, in case of German inspection. Later on we grew less careful. The SS left the internal camp administration to a great extent in the hands of the so-called self-government. And in the evening, the SS-personnel, though armed, disliked venturing into the crowded quarters, let alone into the dark and dangerous corners of the attics. Every performance was regularly reported to the German Command, according to regulations, naturally very often under a fictitious title. What was actually being played on the stage could only have been betrayed by an informer from within our own ranks. But the inmates of the Terezín ghetto loved their theatre too much for that. We relied on the prisoners' solidarity and were never disappointed. It was not until the summer of 1944 that the Czech theatre was banned. I cannot judge how clear an idea the German Command had up to that time, that plays had been acted in Czech in the camp. One thing, however, is certain. They never learned about the real character of the Czech theatre. Otherwise, prohibition of its activities would have hardly passed without much worse consequences. The Czech theatre knew how to draw full advantage from its semi-legal position. At that time not a single Czech performance could have passed the Nazi censorship unpunished. These circumstances permitted freedom of artistic expression to be smuggled into a milieu of suppression; Czech cultural life reached unbelievable heights, there was an opera, a stage play, cabarets, recitals and lectures, concerts, a puppet theatre, a children's ensemble and even a children's opera. The performance of the children's opera, "Brundibár," by Hanuš Krása, and Smetana's "Bartered Bride" directed by Rafael Schächter, were among my greatest experiences in the ghetto.

I only know the work of the actors' ensemble really thoroughly. With the exception of a few weeks spent in the typhoid hospital, I was its member from beginning to end. During the whole time I played and rehearsed under all of our directors in turn. I also came in contact with all the actors in the course of my work. I knew them all, it was really a large ensemble, but only a very few of them returned. I should like to commemorate here at least some of the most remarkable artists who did not return, some of the many whose stage career was cut short by hunger marches, in the gas chambers, or who met their death in some other violent form. I have in mind Gustav Schorsch, the director-in-chief, and Karel Schwenk, that excellent author, composer and actor, and then Pepík Lustig, chief of the second cabaret group, and master of dry humour, Jiří Strass, talented actor-director, and from the actors' collective at least Zeileis, the born comic, Franta Plaček, the character actor and many others. It would make a long list of names. Hardly anywhere in the world was there such a grateful audience as in the attics of Terezín. Hardly a single actor anywhere else has ever been rewarded for his endeavours by such love from his public.

It may seem that I somewhat idealize the relation between actor and audience, that I try to show the necessity and importance of our theatre in too favourable a light. How, people will ask, can one speak about a great hunger for culture in a place where there was not even enough bread to eat?

One instance, a description of something that happened during one of our performances, will show better what I mean than a long explanation. "The Wedding" by Gogol was being played. Suddenly there was the alarm signal, a transport going East was being called up right in the interval between the first and second act. None of the actors or audience knew whether he would find his call-up papers for his journey to death waiting for him on his bunk at his return. We wanted to interrupt the performance, but the audience did not permit it. The spectators sacrificed two full hours of irreplaceable time, of precious time, in which they might have taken leave of their friends and packed their most necessary belongings, to be able, once more, for the last time in their lives, to see a theatre play.

The actors' work was not easy. Each of us had his own full-time job in the camp. We could only devote our spare time, that was scarce enough, to the theatre. The working day in the ghetto finished at six p. m., between six and eight we played for the public. Only after the performance could we study our further repertoire. Twice a week, after rehearsals, there was a theatre seminar in the night for beginners, under Schorsch's tuition. On days like these there was little sleep for us. But there was nothing to be done, because the ensemble had to train new talents. It was at the time of the most terrible transports. Trains were constantly leaving for the East from the station of Bohušovice, fully loaded with human cattle in sealed trucks. And nearly every transport mercilessly destroyed one of our carefully rehearsed performances. The hero, the comic, the lover, wiped the grease paint off his face and went to pack his bundle for the journey from which there was no return. But the play had to go on.

Those left behind were doubly in need of consolation. Many had said good-bye to their nearest and dearest yesterday; and the more difficult and responsible was our task today, to make them laugh, or at least give them an hour's forgetfulness and new hope.

It was no easy matter to put together a suitable repertoire. We had, of course, no theatre literature at hand, where we could have made an easy choice. Only now and then, instead of something more practical, somebody had brought a book with him in the permitted fifty kilograms, which he readily put at our disposal. But it so happened that from time to time a new book that we longed for appeared, as if it had fallen from the sky. And from time to time, one could see a civilian in the crowd, the Star of David carefully stitched to his coat, who bore a striking likeness to a member of the Czech Terezín gendarmerie. Smuggling of this sort was particularly dangerous for the Czech gendarmes. I do not know exactly, how these supplies were brought in. It was always better, when as few people as possible were in the know about such things. I am convinced, however, that our theatre received support in this way from the most unsuspected quarters, where unselfish help was least expected.

And thus, in a concentration camp, in the middle of a war, we played a repertoire that no progressive, free theatre need be ashamed of. Plays by Jiří Wolker, Karel

Čapek, Chekhov, Gogol, the folk play about Queen Esther adapted by E. F. Burian, plays by Cocteau, Molière, František Langer, J. K. Tyl, Štech, Jelínek, etc. Besides these, a number of plays had been rehearsed, which could never be played because of the transports, e. g., Measure for Measure, the Judge of Zalaméa, Princess Dandelion, Sonnets by K. H. Mácha, etc. Some plays, which could not be performed for various technical reasons, such as Goethe's Faust, or Jánošík by Mahen, were read at sessions round the table in the form of seminars. There were also recitals from the works of Czech poets, i. e., Dyk, Neruda, Halas, and scenes from Erben's Kytice and François Villon's Ballads.

It would be difficult to find a play in the entire repertoire, which had no higher aim than that to entertain and amuse the audience. The artistic level of the performances at that period was very high. Fortunately, we were not bound by fixed first-night dates. The play came before the public only when it was quite ready. Gustav Schorsch, our theatre manager, remained faithful to the principle that only the very best was good enough for our public. This was not always an easy task. The members of the Czech ensemble were very young. Our oldest character actors were still in their twenties. Some of them had had some little experience in their profession, others stood for the first time "on the boards that mean the world," in the attics of Terezín. But the hard work at rehearsals, the nightly seminars in which Gustav Schorsch worked systematically to develop the practical possibilities and the acting capacity of the ensemble, and, last but not least, the enthusiasm with which everybody approached his task, in the end overcame the lack of experience. And so, after some time, the Czech theatre ensemble was able to achieve extraordinary success, and some of the first nights would have stood comparison with the very best in the world.

The most important elements in our repertoire were those created in Terezín. Plays, which came into being directly in the camp, which reacted straight to the main problems of camp life, were naturally most successful among the ghetto prisoners. Among these must be mentioned Kühn's "Puppets" and Jelínek's "Play about the Trap" as well as, naturally, the entire repertoire of both satirical theatres, whose managers were also the playwrights, i. e., "The Prince in Bed" and "Ben Akiba Told a Lie," works by the co-authors Lustig and Spitz, as well as Schwenk's plays "Long Live Life" and "The Last Cyclist."

Unfortunately not a single copy of the original Terezín plays has been preserved, the texts being much too dangerous to be kept unnecessarily in one's luggage, which could be checked at any time. And so they were only retained in memory, which is not reliable. I saw Jelínek's and Kühn's plays only as a spectator, though I remember the plays I acted in myself a little better.

"The Prince in Bed" was a cabaret revue rather than a full-length play, and took, as the title indicates, life inside the camp for its subject. A couple of clowns, played by the authors, commented wittily in front of the curtain, on everything that had happened in the ghetto. Otto Neumann's topical texts were sung to Ježek's melodies. The other play by the same authors, "Ben Akiba Told a Lie," was arranged in a similar way. It had, however, its own framework—Paradise—from where Empress Maria Theresa, with her son Joseph, watches the world through a telescope, and especially Terezín, the city she had once founded to protect Bohemia

from the Prussians. Two "non-Aryan" souls, coming to heaven, inform her in detail of the present situation in her city. The play ends by declaring that, contrary to the ancient philosopher's statement that there is nothing new under the sun, something was happening in the world that had never happened before.

While Spitz and Lustig took camp life for the subject of their satire, Schwenk drew upon wider topics. Like Spitz and Lustig, Schwenk too, played the main role in his cabaret. He was a born comic, an unlucky fellow, tripping over his own legs, but always coming out on top in the end. There may have been a little of Charlie Chaplin in it, the dead-pan face reminded one of Buster Keaton, but principally he was Karel Schwenk himself. He wrote his own words and music for his plays "Long Live Life" and the "Last Cyclist." Some of them were sung by the entire ghetto.

"The Last Cyclist" was undoubtedly the most courageous of our plays. For the first time in the history of the Terezín Czech theatre, the censorship of the Council of Elders interfered. They wanted to give us permission for the performance only on condition that the end of the play was struck out. Schwenk agreed, for appearances' sake, but the play ran unshortened at the performances.

The basic idea of the play was the well-known saying that "the Jews and the cyclists were to blame for all misfortune." In a nameless country lunatics have succeeded in escaping from the asylum, and have become the country's rulers. The woman dictator "Paní" (which means Mrs. in Czech) immediately proclaims the first mad law: all cyclists, and also all those who cannot prove that their ancestors for six generations had been pedestrians, shall be deported without delay to Horror Island. The hero of the play, Bořivoj Abeles, a cyclist, happens to fall overboard during the crossing, reaches land safely and so becomes the last cyclist in a country of pedestrians. (I should like to point out here, that Abeles always gets out of all the troubles that befall him by chance and never through any efforts of his own. In the ghetto, situated in enemy territory, the so-called "Sudetengau", it was not possible to incite the defenceless, unarmed prisoners to rise. To go on living was only a matter of chance, not influenced by one's own actions.) The woman dictator learns about Bořivoj's escape through her magic mirror. This mirror, however, warns her not to kill the last cyclist. No country on earth could exist without a cyclist, because there would be nobody to blame for things that might go wrong. Cyclists had always been the best scapegoats. Thus the dictatoress "Paní" orders the "Führer" of the "Little Flag" organization—an allusion to the fascist Quisling organization "Vlajka" (the Flag)—to apprehend Bořivoj Abeles and to exhibit him in the zoo as the last living specimen of a cyclist. The "Führer" Krysa (which means rat in Czech) sets to work with enthusiasm. After many adventures, in which Bořivoj is always lucky enough to escape at the last moment, Krysa finally succeeds in taking the last cyclist prisoner. During a hunger rebellion Bořivoj is branded as its ringleader and sentenced by a State Tribunal, as enemy of the state, to be launched in a rocket to the moon. And for the last time chance steps in. The dictatoress and her suite inspect the interior of the rocket, while the prisoner is permitted to express his last wish. He would like, for the last time, to smoke a cigarette. His eyes bent upon his beloved Mánička, the "unwilling cosmonaut," instead of lighting his cigarette, puts a match to the ignition of the rocket. The

dictatoress, together with her retinue of lunatics, goes up in the air. Bořivoj runs joyfully to the front of the stage, appealing to the crowd in unmistakable terms to go home, that the rule of lunatics was over. But Mánička—Little Mary—restrains him warningly. The end has come only here on the stage, but down there, the rule of madmen continues. Down there, nobody will be allowed to say what he thinks, he can only say in his mind the words he will one day say out loud.

Then the curtain went up once more. The chords of a well-known fighting song were played on the piano. On the stage, holding hands, stood the cast and moved their lips as if they were singing the inciting text. Then the melody of the fighting song changed to some harmless tune, to return after a few bars to the original fighting melody. And the cast—in dumb show—went on singing.

The audience knew exactly what was meant.

Such was the Czech theatre at Terezín. These were the plays performed in a concentration camp. But it was not heroism. I have already explained why the danger was not so great as may have seemed at first sight. The importance of our theatre for the ghetto was, however, much greater than can be imagined today. From the stage we fought for basic moral values. The loss of human dignity could much more easily break the prisoners than starvation, forced labour and maltreatment. Such a performance was able to change a lot of nameless transport numbers into an enthusiastic human community. Perhaps only for two hours. But some feelings remained and were taken back to one's cold, bare quarters. And this spark gave light and warmth for several days. It is my belief that this was the most precious gift that the Czech theatre could give to its public.



ARNOŠT WEISS

MUSICAL EVENTS IN TEREZÍN 1942



LOVE of music has been especially well developed among the Jews. From the Psalms and the traditional liturgical chants, the way leads through the art songs of the prayer leader and the performances of folk music in the Jewish communities, that are being collected today to use as foundations for specific Jewish music.

In the Prague ghetto there were a great number of lute- and violin-makers, and documents show that instrumental music was often performed there at all times. With emancipation came a blossoming of musical culture among the Jews throughout the world, and their contribution as composers, conductors, musicologists, critics, instrumentalists and singers is astounding, both in quality and in quantity. Furthermore, the hearts of the Jewish people were often moved by light music, and then again by very demanding serious music, and they became a music public capable of enthusiasm and appreciation.

In almost every large town where Jews have lived, there have been Jewish families cultivating chamber music in an intimate circle; especially in Prague after the First World War, there was an unbelievably large number of good amateur quartets. I myself continued our family tradition of holding chamber music evenings, and I played with like-minded persons in Prague when in 1940 we had been expelled from my native town of Olomouc. Here I met Robert Kafka, engineer, and Leo Krieger, who had formerly been, as I had, a member of the music association orchestra in Olomouc. The distinguished cellist Hoyos completed the quartet that made music every week in Kafka's flat.

My son took his first violin lessons from Professor Erich Wachtel, the outstanding pedagogue who also headed a youth orchestra in which my wife played the cello. We were often in the company of his quartet, in which he played the viola, Paul Herz first violin, Leo Sommer, the husband of the well-known pianist Alice Herz, second violin, and Dr. Jóši Haas, our old Olomouc friend, the cello. So, despite all the laws restricting the Jews and the decrees that limited our freedom of movement and cut us off from all public institutions, then confiscated our radio sets and declared us outlaws with the Jewish star on our breasts, we were able to satisfy our hunger for music all the more intensively in an intimate circle.

Then at Christmas came a further decree from the German administration, ordering Jews to give in all musical instruments in their possession. So one saw many co-believers with violin cases and all sorts of musical instruments going to the "Joseph Quarter." At any rate, it was mostly inferior fiddles that were handed in and the master instruments were given to friends for safe keeping. I myself gave four good instruments to be repaired by Master Lancinger and handed in a bad one.

Now, sad to say, the music making was at an end, for no one dared to keep an instrument in his house. But our stay in Prague was also soon ended, for we were included in Transport V with numbers 825, 826 and 827, and had to report at the collection centre, the Trade Fair grounds on January 27, 1942. There we spent three nights in abnormally cold weather, lying on the floor of an unheated hall, and on January 30 arrived at our destination Terezín. We were housed in the Hamburg barracks, that had formerly held soldiers. Several families lay in one room, we spread our blankets or sleeping bags on the floor, ate our first soup and lay down to rest.

Then a simple, pious woman took two candles from her hand luggage and lighted them, for it was Friday evening. And after a little while of general silence, a girl from Prague-Košíře, by the name of Sina Weisz, began to sing Jewish melodies with eloquent emphasis. The candles burnt low, the children had long since gone to sleep, it had become quite still, and the festive, confiding spirit accompanied us all into the first night of our new, common fate.

Poor children! Poor people! One thousand were deported in Transport V and only 32 adults and five children survived the Nazis' rule of terror.

The next day the men were separated from their families and 26 of us were sent to the Cavalier barracks, newly adapted for settlement. A two-storey, long building in the walls of the fortress, on the ground floor former stalls with vaulted tops, on the upper floor damp, gloomy rooms with concrete floors and small iron stoves. Washrooms and latrines were completely insufficient for the number housed here. A room was assigned us, shavings were strewn on the floor and on this we laid blankets to make a place to sleep. Only later did we get straw pallets, a table and two benches.

As a boy I could whistle well, even in two voices, and so I often whistled without being conscious of this. In the latrine an elderly man called to me, "Look, young man, do you know what you are whistling?"

"Certainly," I said, "Beethoven's Razumovsky Quartet No. 1."

He came to me with tears on his eyes and introduced himself as a former member of the Berlin Philharmonic, lately concert-master Freudenthal of the Ústí Opera. He now whistled the first part and I whistled and hummed the other three instruments. My first quartet playing in Terezín.

But soon there were others.

I was called to the technical department that had offices and drafting rooms, as did the other departments, in the Magdeburg barracks, and now I shared my sleeping room with fifteen others who were employed in all different departments. The large room, with its roughly hewn wooden beds, seemed quite comfortable to me, though it was also a passageway, leading to the youth secretary's offices, with various sub-units such as the cleaning squad, the household service, etc., and where also the unforgettable youth secretary Fredi Hirsch lived. The members of the Council of Elders and of the staff had their well equipped dwellings and here also was a room that served as prayer room and later as a culture room as well.

Among the young people there were enthusiastic musicians, and one day they invited me to the joint dwelling of the Grünfelds and Kleins. It was a large, and at the same time intimate room that had been put at the disposal of the first Terezín Chamber Music Association. It was to become a string quartet of high quality with former concertmaster of the Prague Philharmonic Egon Ledeč as first violin. A spirited amateur by the name of Schneider was a dependable second violin, former bandmaster Viktor Kohn, who had a touch of genius in his make-up, played the viola, and his brother Walter was an excellent cellist. An audience of art enthusiasts defied the events of the time, perched on every possible sort of improvised sitting arrangement, and applauded the wonderful performance.

Through my acquaintanceship with the musicians I learned that their instruments had been taken with them officially, since the Council of Elders had allowed a certain

number of string instruments and accordions, besides other objects that otherwise were strictly forbidden to take to Terezín.

Edelstein's assistant, Mr. Zucker, played the violin, Dr. Erich Klapp the cello, and so music was played at their place. Ledeč, Viktor Kohn, Dr. Ilona Král and Dr. Klapp set up together the so-called Doctor's Quartet.

Work was assigned to the musicians that would spare their hands and give them enough time to practise. So Egon Ledeč and Viktor Kohn were appointed room orderlies in their sleeping wards in the Magdeburg barracks, and the young artists were put in the Ghetto Guards. Among these were the most active violin player Karl Fröhlich and Wolfgang Lederer, the pianist who also played the accordion with masterly skill.

Once I noticed that, after Viktor Kohn had straightened the room and had made the fire in the stove, he was writing scores industriously. He complained that only a very small number of scores were available and often they were only scattered sheets where a good deal was missing, and so he had to fill them out from memory. Thereupon I declared I was ready and willing to find some somewhere. He thought this completely impossible, but I had my own plan and began to carry it out.

As head of the construction section that had to do with the foundation, I had the task of buying material from the Aryan population, and therefore, as a rare exception, received a pass to go out of the ghetto. It was punishable by death to be found among the outside population except on official business. This prohibition was ignored, for example, by a member of the Council of Elders Mr. Hess who, in the course of building a railway spur at the Bohušovice station, got some vegetables from a supplier. The result was, he was taken out of the ghetto which meant his liquidation.

While I was out on official business I came across a house that had a sign saying that the Žalud firm, manufacturers of woodwind instruments, was located there. I introduced myself to Mr. Žalud, acquainted him with my official business and then, since I had quickly noticed that he was a very decent and helpful man, I gave him a list of the most necessary quartet scores, with the request that he get them to me, of course for a fee. I was lucky and was very happy to be able to give our musicians quartets by Beethoven, Mozart, Dvořák and Schubert.

A week later we had completed our preparation of Schubert's "Death and the Maiden," besides a quartet on Jewish themes that had been composed by the young composer Sigmund Schul. This time no third quartet was played, but Ledeč and Viktor Kohn were in the mood to improvise, as they often did together. One of them would lead off with a theme, the other took it up immediately and developed it, then the first would join in with harmony, and one variation would follow another until a new theme emerged and the play was repeated. Everyone listened with bated breath to this unique type of creation by our brilliant artists, and it is a crying shame that there were no tape recorders at that time.

The streets of Terezín, inhabited by the natives of the place until June 30, 1942, could be entered by Jews only in closed working groups. Individuals had the right to leave the barracks alone only if they had official passes which they had to show to the guard at the gate. Thus it was that every barracks, since it had to rely on its

own resources, tried to provide as good cultural facilities as possible. True, there was an official "Freizeitgestaltung," under the leadership of the young rabbi Erich Weiner, but I will recount mainly the musical events of 1942 in the Magdeburg barracks.

Here music was performed privately—not within the framework of the Freizeitgestaltung—by Ledeč and partners. One evening when the audience waited in vain for the second violinist, I was able to save the situation and, completely unprepared, took over his part. We played Beethoven's harp quartet and Dvořák's American. I was in good form and got over all the shoals, so it came off excellently. Afterwards I was often brought in as "deputy." A Vienna transport brought a former violinist of the Rosé Quartet, the elderly Štverka, who still loved to play and who took over the second violin. Another distinguished chamber music player came from Vienna, too, the famous cellist Horowitz, who took over the task of staying at the side of the young people's quartet as advisor. It was made up of first violinist Karl Fröhlich, second violinist Bubi Taussig, the viola player Romuald Süssman and the cellist Friedrich Mark. They were highly talented, serious, enthusiastic musicians, through and through.

Carlo Taube had completed the composition of his Terezín Symphony and invited me to a private première in the prayer room of the Magdeburg barracks. A small string orchestra sat at their stands on the podium and behind them stood four men with accordions that substituted for brass and wood winds and for which some parts had to be rewritten because of the deadness of their tone. Greeted heartily by the full hall, the composer took his place at the conductor's stand for the first orchestral concert in the ghetto. Not much remains in my memory from the first two movements that characterized the milieu with Jewish and Slavic themes. But the third movement had a shattering effect on the hearers. Mrs. Erika Taube, the wife of the composer, recited in a moving way, with a pianissimo obbligato from the orchestra, a lullaby of a Jewish mother, which she had composed. There followed a turbulent finale in which the first four bars of "Deutschland über Alles" were repeated over and over again ringing out in more and more wrathful spasms, until the last outcry . . . "Deutschland, Deutschland" . . . did not continue to "über Alles," but died out in a terrible dissonance. Every one had understood and a storm of applause expressed thanks to Carlo and Erika Taube and all the musicians.

Naturally a work of this sort could not be performed officially and it is distressing that this unique cultural document was not passed on to us. There is a lullaby that the Taubes dedicated to the art-minded Zucker, but it is not identical with the lullaby in the symphony.

At the beginning of July the gates of the barracks were opened and the people poured into the streets of the city that had been left empty by its former inhabitants and now for the first time the fortress, surrounded by trenches and barbed wire fences, had become a true Jewish city, a ghetto. The continual arrival of transports made the population far exceed the capacity, despite the attic rooms that had been fixed for sleeping and the three-tier bunks in the barracks rooms. The water system was completely insufficient and the plague of vermin was unbearable. It was no wonder that, as a consequence, the demands made on all departments, especially on our technical section, had grown enormously. It is all the more astonishing that

the cultural activity did not suffer in any way, and our drafting rooms, that served the painters and graphic artists as workrooms, along with us technicians, often became temples of art.

Thus there was an exhibition of paintings by Fritta, Ungar and Kien, with a genuine vernissage, where the young cellist Kurt Heller, pupil of the Prague cellist Sádlo, played a Bach suite. The opening speech and the subsequent guide to the exhibition by Mr. Zucker, the "deputy Judenältester" and protector of our artists. The exhibition contained portraits and harmless Terezín scenes. The true aspect of Terezín could be put on paper only behind locked doors and hidden in safe places. Thus these pictures by Fritta and Ungar were preserved for later times. The SS did get wind of this activity and this cost both artists their lives.

On another occasion the youth quartet were guests in our drafting room, and Fröhlich, Taussig, Süssmann and Mark performed, besides Haydn and Mozart, the String Quartet Op. 67 by Johannes Brahms, studied with the help of the master Horowitz and with excellent rendition.

When work was not going on in the drafting rooms they served the diligent musicians as exercise rooms, and here Karli Fröhlich also prepared himself for his first concert. This took place in September in the attic of a Young People's Home, Wolfi Lederer playing the accompaniment. He surprised the hearers with the quite extraordinary, unique performance of Mozart's A major Violin Concerto, using for the accompaniment . . . an accordion. But the young virtuoso Lederer played the introduction on the accordion in such a fine and impeccable style that one was scarcely aware of its unaccustomed tone. Fröhlich and Lederer showed in their fine coordination that they were indisputably talented interpreters of Mozart, and the grateful audience expressed their joy by showering the greatly moved Karli and Wolfi with applause.

The greatest musical event of 1942 was the première of Smetana's "The Bartered Bride," that had gone through long and intensive preparations and had been awaited with excitement.

The singer Heda Gráb, soon after her fortunate return on September 29, 1945, recounted the following:

"Rafael Schächter, who lived in the Sudeten barracks and there led the Jewish choruses' practice every evening, for which I had gladly lent him a pitch pipe, had the idea of studying the choruses from the 'Bartered Bride.'

"I persuaded young girls in the women's barracks to take part and he practiced in the Sudeten barracks with the men. When, as time passed, suitable soloists appeared, he decided to prepare the entire opera, at least as a concert performance. In the gymnasium a half-demolished piano without feet was found, and also a badly damaged accordion was acquired. With this Schächter could practise with his singers in a little cellar room that had been put at his disposal, where it was often so cold that, though they were wrapped up to the ears, the singers froze. Finally, all was ready. In the night the piano was transferred secretly from the gymnasium, that was at the edge of the city, to the ghetto. In a boys' home the physical culture room was made available to us, and so finally on November 28, 1942, we could present 'The Bartered Bride' for the first time in Terezín. It made an unforgettable impression. When the first bars, 'Proč

bychom se netěšili . . .,'[1] sounded, there was not a dry eye in the house. 'The Bartered Bride' was performed about thirty-five times."

Yes, indeed, there *was* and *remained* an unforgettable impression for me and for thousands who, with me, and after me, acclaimed "The Bartered Bride" in Terezín. This event filled everyone with gratitude, pride and joy, and gave each one of us hope and courage for the later way into the Unknown. And when, despite all suffering, optimism lay uppermost for many, then they also thought or sang:

"Why should we not rejoice,
when God has granted us health?"

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(1) "Why should we not rejoice . . ."

Concert in the Old School Garret

(PLAYED BY GIDEON KLEIN)

White fingers of the sexton sleep heavy upon us
Half a century
Since anyone as much as touched this piano.
Let it sing again
As it was made to yesterday.

Phantom hands which strike softly or which
thunder.
The forehead of this man heavy as the heavens
before it rains.

And the springs,
Under the weight of excitement, forgot to squeak
Half a century it is since anyone as much as
touched this piano.

Our good friend, Time,
Sucked each figure empty like a honeybee
Which has lived long enough
And drunk enough honey
So that now it can dry out in the sun somewhere.

Under the closed eyes, another person sits,
Under the closed eyes, he seeks among the keys
As among the veins through which the blood
flows softly
When you kiss them with a knife and put a song
to it.

And this man yesterday cut all the veins,
Opening all the organ's stops,
Paid all the birds to sing,
To sing

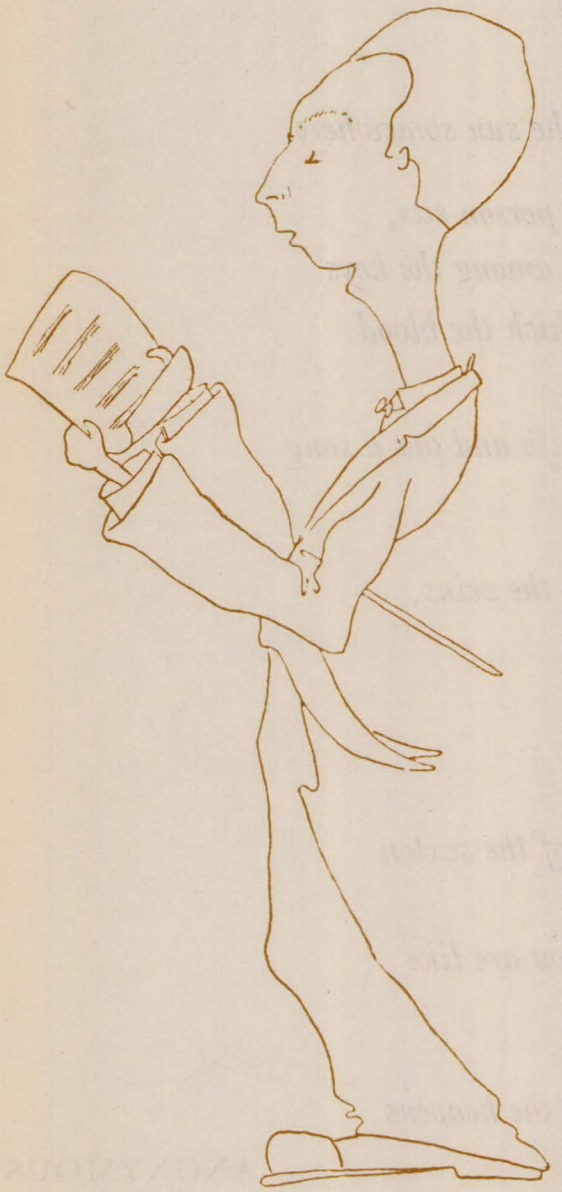
Even though the harsh fingers of the sexton
sleep heavy upon us.
Bent in his manner of death, you are like
Beethoven

Your forehead was as heavy as the heavens
before it rains.

ANONYMOUS

KAREL BERMAN

MEMORIES



A procession of taciturn people walked from the Trade-Fair Palace to the Holešovice Railway Station on March 5th, 1943, at nine o'clock in the morning, a procession of people laden with packs and bundles, with their hearts full of horror, faith and hope. They were marked by the letters Cv and numbered from 1 to 1020.

My name was Cv 1002. In the afternoon we reached one of the ends of the world. Terezín.

I worked with the dustmen, and one day Lexa Singer, tenor and tailor, came for me and told me that I was wanted and that I should sing something for Rafael Schächter, to become a member of his opera. I had known Schächter in Prague only by name, but I knew that he was one of the outstanding Prague musicians and so I was looking forward to meeting him in person. A deep friendship sprang up between us, we understood each other perfectly and in the course of our future work we started to make plans for getting together a large ensemble, which could become the basis for a large modern opera in Prague after the war.

I remembered that, when I got out of the train at Smíchov Station on May 25th, 1945, arriving in liberated Prague, and I remembered that again later on, when I was rejected during the entrance examinations because of unsuitability,—I still had a rather concentration-camp-like face—turned down by that great modern opera, on whose stage I have now been singing for nearly twelve years.

Before I came to Terezín, they had had their celebrated, legendary, première of "The Bartered Bride," in the gymnasium of the Terezín school building. It was a concert performance by an ensemble of enthusiasts, brought together in the evenings, and trained in attics by Heda Gráb and Rafael Schächter, to the accompaniment of an accordion. The audience sat on the floor, on the gymnasium apparatus, on the windows, in the doors, behind the doors. The piano stood on two wooden trestles, heaven knows where they had got hold of it. And at the piano sat, played, conducted—Rafík. And everybody wept at the beauty of it all. And this is how Schächter's opera ensemble was formed, of which I became a member in March 1943. And in this "Bartered Bride," staged in this way, I later sang Kecal 25 times in various part of the ghetto.

Then we did the "Marriage of Figaro" in the "Magdeburg" barracks, and on July 20th there was again a great first night. In the attic of the "Dresden" barracks, on an improvised concert platform, we played Smetena's "Kiss." Truda Borger sang Vendulka, Ada Schwarz Martinka, Tamara Zucker Barča, Karel Polák sang Matthew, Walter Windholz Matouš, I sang the part of Paloucký and Franta Weissenstein sang Lucas. Franta went before me during selection in Auschwitz. SS-man Mengele pointed his thumb to the right for him, to the left for me. We took silent leave, and looked at each other for a long moment. Then he got onto the truck. The death factory was working at full speed.

When I remember my friends from the Terezín opera today, then I have the feeling myself, that it was all only a dream. But at home I have mementos, different things, even a photostatic copy of the poster for "The Kiss," sheet music, even manuscripts . . .

Our ensemble—there were two other German ensembles in Terezín—up to the time of our transport to the East, employed forty soloists and an immense mixed choir. Later we studied and performed on the platform of the former cinema Mozart's

"Magic Flute," Oh, how Ada Hecht from Vienna sang the Queen of the Night, how clearly intonated were the trios of the ladies and boys, how powerful the male choir . . . !

It was on the tiny little stage of the "Magdeburg" barracks that we staged the opera for the first time. It was an experiment that turned out well. Instead of an orchestra we had a string quartet and it was Honza Jochowitz who arranged it all. He was a wonderful comrade. He died in my arms in the concentration camp of Kaufering, so emaciated that he was literally skin and bones.

How many concerts we prepared together, what subjects we discussed, what plans we made for the future . . . !

In our studio, cellar L 410—that was in the home for young people, the first house to the right from the church—the old and nearly deaf German conductor Bendix used to sit, copying music under the supervision of the chief "archivist" Franta Stránský. And sometimes we got together there for a bit of "gossip," for Bendix had seen a lot, and how he could tell about what he had seen! But it was a holiday for our "debating circle" when Kurt Otto Singer from Berlin came among us, and the actor Meinhardt. That was really "haute école." We spoke about interpretation, operas, chamber music, conductors, authors and artists, in short, whatever came to our minds, we discussed everything. Art, but also cooking, disease, but also how to asphalt roads. And when Rafík rehearsed, only these three were allowed to have a say and advise him. Otherwise, woe to anyone who dared to interfere with work discipline.

Rafík sat behind a large harmonium on a small platform and before him on the first board the soloists and on the other boards the choir. In this way our greatest work was rehearsed—Verdi's Requiem. That was a festive première in the small hall, or rather the committee room of the former town hall. On the platform stood the 150-member mixed chorus, before them the soloists: Marion Podolier, Heda Aronson-Lindt, David Grünfeld and myself, below the platform the two pianos, behind one of them Gideon Klein, behind the other Editha Kraus and in front of us all on a little box stood Rafael Schächter, who knew the difficult score perfectly by heart. It was a revolutionary and militant feat that had no equal. The Requiem had to be rehearsed three times in all, because after every first performance a large part of the chorus left in one of the transports.

How often did we sing out resistance and give the people strength to endure! We were indeed risking our necks when we sang in the concentration camp with my chorus "The hour has struck—the gates are opening"—from Smetana's "Brandenburgs in Bohemia," or when we sang in Czech, the opera "In the Well," though it was officially forbidden to speak Czech in public.

I remember doing a concert in the "Hannover" barracks on the occasion of our National Holiday, beginning with Veruna's aria from Blodek's opera "In the Well," —"O wicked time, the present time," continuing with the aria of King Vladislav from "Dalibor"—"You know already how this lovely kingdom, the victim has become of passions wild . . ." and going on in the same vein right to the end.

In commemoration of the 60th anniversary of Frederic Smetana's death we gave a great concert on the stage of the former Sokol gymnasium, conducted by Schächter. The first number was Smetana's male chorus "Song of the Sea," then two trios for

women's voices and the "Even Song" interpreted by Walter Windholz. After the intermission, accompanied by two pianos (Dr. Karel Reiner and myself) the stage resounded with "Czech Song."

On the stage of the Sokol gymnasium we rehearsed—under Meinhardt's directing—an interesting original piece, composed by the Prague composer Victor Ullmann, one of Schönberg's pupils. The opera was entitled "Der Kaiser von Atlantis, oder die Tod-Verweigerung." I think that today it would be a most topical opera, its tendency was so strongly anti-war, that it was prohibited before it was ever performed. Specifically, the end of Hitler was the theme. The score has not been preserved, Ullmann took it with him to Auschwitz . . .

The last première I put on, together with Franta Zelenka before we were transported to the East, was Pergolesi's opera buffa—"La Serva Padrona." The chamber orchestra was conducted by Rafael Schächter, who himself accompanied the recitatives on the piano. After three further performances our ensemble was liquidated. Most of them left. Destination unknown.

I remember the many solo concerts given by European maestros of their instruments, or singers, all the pictures, statues, lectures given in turn by historians, university professors and amateurs, painters and sculptors, Catholic and Protestant priests, rabbis and non-believers, from Bohemia and from all over Hitler-occupied Europe. Prisoners destined for extermination. If the historians one day succeed in writing the cultural history of the ghetto of Terezín, mankind will be amazed. Grown-ups and children, in constant expectation of death, lived a full, noble life, between outcries of pain and anxiety, among the "mussulmans,"* in hunger and misery, among the hundreds of corpses of those that died daily, among hearses taking the corpses out of town and bringing back bread, under constant great physical exertion, they lived a life that was a miracle under the given conditions.

Indeed, few of those who survived the Nazi hell realize today, what strength was necessary for man not to lose his human dignity, not to lose faith in man, to write, to calculate, to sing and recite even though he had lost his name, to philosophize and think realistically, though he had become a mere number.

On September 28th, a procession of taciturn people boarded the cattle trucks behind the "Hannover" barracks, a procession of people with packs and bundles, with their hearts full of horror, faith and hope. The transport included many Czech scientists and artists. It was marked Ek and numbered from 1 up to 2,499.

I no longer remember what my number was.

Nor do I remember whether we were under way two or three days, but I do remember, that about one o'clock in the morning we reached one of the ends of hell. Auschwitz.

(*) Emaciated inmates, near death by starvation.

KAREL ANČERL

MUSIC IN TEREZÍN



"THE FINAL SOLUTION OF THE JEWISH PROBLEM" sounded quite good as a euphemism for the extermination of the Jews. Several stages could be distinguished in the process.

The depraved Nazi brains, trained solely for crime, aimed first at the most brutal humiliation of human dignity, unparalleled in the course of history. They founded ghettos, serving, first, as assembly points for defenceless masses of humanity, to be ruled there by trained criminals, and, second, as the first step towards extermination camps. One of these ghettos was established in Terezín in 1941.

When I was sent to Terezín with my family in November 1942, after having already acquired pretty thorough experience of Nazi hangmen and their prisons, I was immediately drawn into the senseless activities of ghetto life, unimaginable to those who have not experienced it themselves. Everything I saw and experienced there was beyond any logical thought. Nothing was compatible with normal common sense. Everything was organized through and through to satisfy hatred, crime and the lust to kill. Uncertainty and fear were the mental whip and might of the chosen specimens of the "Herrenvolk." A picture that might find its likeness only in the most phantastic imagery of a Franz Kafka. Yes, the Nazis almost succeeded in exterminating the Jews. What they did not, and could not, achieve, however, was to destroy thought, to destroy what is human in man. The ghetto prisoners, worthy of admiration, were starving, but not only physically. Mental starvation for many of them was far more difficult to bear. The deformed minds of the overlords naturally could not grasp that; therefore it was possible to mete out food for thought unrationed under the watchful eyes of these masters. Gratitude must be expressed to many outstanding scientists for having instructed the ghetto inmates at hundreds of valuable lectures. Actors, singers, musicians must be thanked for having given many hours of pure joy and artistic pleasure in every form. Encouraged by my friend and school fellow Rafael Schächter, who was training an excellent mixed choir, I, too, gathered a group of enthusiastic musicians in order to form an orchestra. I chose my musicians not only from among former professionals, but soon found also a number of first-class amateurs, who were easily won for my idea. Putting the idea into practice was very difficult. It soon became obvious that enthusiasm alone was not enough for success in the undertaking. Among the many, ever changing inhabitants, leaving in transports and arriving in new ones, there were only few who could play a wind instrument, though there was a sufficient number of strings. This is why I first tried to form a string orchestra. But even here I had more players than instruments. We succeeded, however, with the help of the then still existing Jewish Community in Prague, in smuggling in as many string instruments as was at all possible. And when, one day, a doublebass arrived, we were ready to start rehearsing, but—we had no scores. The ghetto library was searched from top to bottom and we found some small scores from which I selected Haendel's Concerto Grosso in F Major, Mozart's "Kleine Nachtmusik" and Bach's Violin Concerto in E Minor for our first rehearsals. Now there were scores, but no music paper to copy the individual parts. Paper was strictly rationed. Our will to play music overcame all obstacles. We received a little paper from the officials of the Council of Elders. It was so bad that it was hardly possible to write on it in ink. The rest of the badly needed paper was "organized," i. e., stolen at every available oppor-

tunity. Now we had to line the paper all night long and to copy the individual parts. This was done in an incredibly short time and we now owned an archive of three numbers. A period of hard rehearsing began. Each member of the orchestra had his own, for the most part very hard, job to do during day-time. The enthusiasm of the majority, however, was so infectious, that hardly anybody missed rehearsals and I was able to increase my demands from rehearsal to rehearsal. The number of instruments in the orchestra was remarkable. There were twelve first violins, ten second violins, eight violas, eight violoncellos and one doublebass. To achieve tone balance of the orchestra, I had to support the doublebass by two violoncellos. We were a men's orchestra. It so happened that I found only one woman who was able to play in my orchestra and funnily enough it was the largest and lowest instrument that was played by the only woman member—the doublebass. Today, twenty years later, it is hardly possible to imagine the quality of the orchestra which existed scarcely for a year; in any case, one thing was revealed to me, that the power of music is so great that it draws every human being possessing a heart and an open mind into its realm, enabling him to bear the hardest hours of his life. I shall always be grateful for this revelation to all the doctors, "Hausälteste," professors, coal porters, agricultural workers from the ghetto farm and all those who helped to form my orchestra.

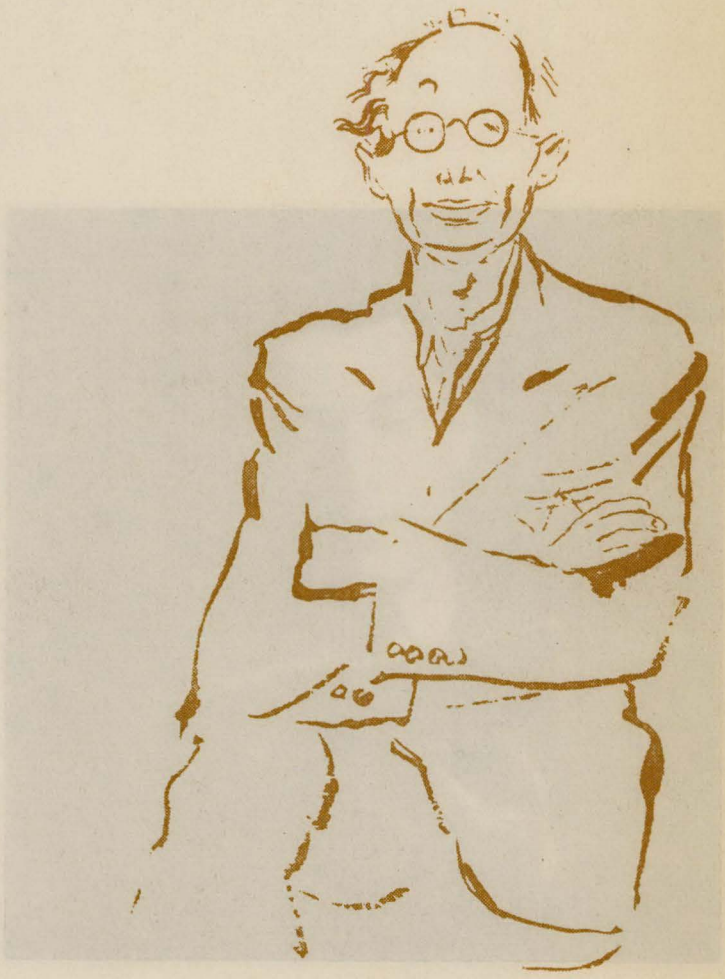
It was not only the members of the orchestra who were captured by our music, there were many who would come and sit quietly in a corner during every rehearsal, not minding the innumerable repetitions of one phrase to get it quite right.

Our "public" awaited our first concert with great excitement. The hall, in which we were allowed to play, was overcrowded, the corridors were crammed with people who wanted to hear the whole program for the first time. Our success was so great, that we were afraid our activities might become embarrassing for the Ghetto Commander. But things went on. We repeated our first program as often as possible, meanwhile rehearsing a new one, dedicated to Czech music. It was Dvořák's Serenade for Strings, the Meditation based on St. Wenceslas' Chorale by Suk, and the Phantasy for Strings especially composed for us by the ghetto prisoner Paul Haas. When we had finished rehearsing this program, orders came to hold the concert in the hall of the so-called café. Surprised, knowing that no good could come of it, we were let into the flower-decorated hall. We were all issued black suits, my conductor's stand was lined with flowers to hide my clogs. Soon a high official visitor in SS-uniform appeared to inspect if everything was going all right. Czech Quislings with film cameras appeared. I was told to introduce the composer Paul Haas after the first performance of his music to the invisible, cheering audience. This farce was filmed to show the world outside the ideal conditions of our ghetto life. The following day the normal concert of our second program took place and two days later, in October 1944, all of us, together with 2,500 other ghetto inmates, were sent in a transport to Auschwitz.

That was the end of the short history of the Terezín orchestra. Only a small fraction of the entire transport survived. The ever hungry furnaces of Auschwitz swallowed up almost the whole transport in the shortest possible time. Of the orchestra only three colleagues, besides myself, survived this transport.

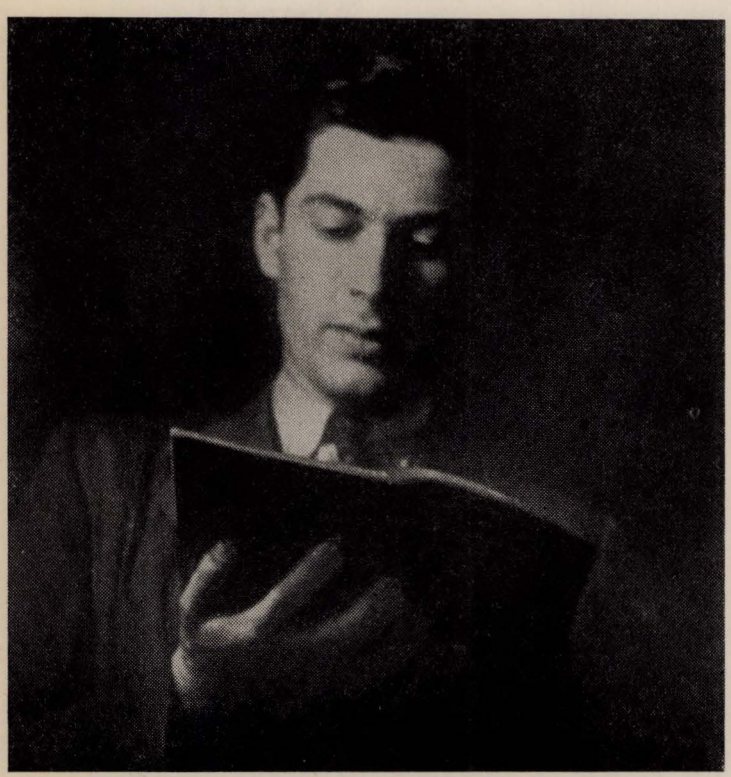
I wanted to name no names in these short reminiscences, because all those who

played music with me were equally dear to me, and all were devoted to music, playing with a selflessness unequalled in normal life. But I should like to make one exception, to prove the rule. I want to mention the name of Egon Ledeč, the former conductor of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, the orchestra at whose head I have now been standing for thirteen years. I should like to set him up as an example for all those who are tired of life or pretend to be. At the age of well over sixty he invested the Terezín string orchestra with his youthful endeavour and drive, giving it all his full physical strength, until he met his death, together with the other members of the orchestra, in the gas chambers of Auschwitz.



TRUDA SOLAROVÁ

GIDEON KLEIN



I met him in Prague, in 1940, when I, a seventeen-year old girl, started to study under the excellent Czech piano teacher, Professor Vilém Kurz. Gideon, tall, slim, with black hair, vivid but controlled, was of extremely impressive and well-groomed appearance. He was considered to be one of the most talented pupils of Professor Kurz, and despite his youth had a distinct personal, developed touch. His outstanding intelligence, his great interest for many different branches of art, for literature, and especially for music, so impressed all who knew him that it seemed as if some strange magic emanated from his personality. All of us, without reserve, admitted the superiority of Gideon Klein, maybe just because he did not try to be better than we were: he was.

He came from an orthodox Jewish family and was born in Přerov, Moravia, on December 6th, 1919. A very talented child, the wild and temperamental boy learned to read and write long before he went to school—but he also knew the names of all football players and teams. His elder sister Lisa Kleinová was already studying music, and the little Gideon soon showed that he possessed absolute pitch. At the age of six he started to take piano lessons at the music school Přerov under Karel Mařík. But when he was nine he was already travelling to Prague regularly once a month, to work with Professor Růžena Kurzová, wife of the pedagogue, and herself a teacher at the conservatoire. When he was twelve he moved to Prague to stay with his sister, who was already living there, and at the same time attended both grammar school and classes at the conservatoire under Professor Kurzová.

As it was forbidden to study at two schools simultaneously, he passed the sixth and seventh class of the grammar school as an external student. He became a regular student again for the last, the eighth class, of the grammar school (1937—1938) and passed his matriculation in Czech with signum laudis. His talent was such, that it was child's play for him to attend the highest piano class under Professor Vilém Kurz and to enroll at the same time, in the autumn of 1938, at the philosophical faculty of Charles University in Prague. And what is more, in the school year 1938—1939 he studied composition as well, under Professor Alois Hába, one of the pioneers of modern music.

To this must be added the concerts of the piano class, in which he participated. His performances found favourable response with the critics, and the reviews have been preserved. After the introduction of the Nuremberg racial laws he continued to perform publicly, but under a different name: Karel Vránek. The critical reviews, which have also been preserved, now praised this apparently new talent. He also worked as pianist at E. F. Burian's avantgarde theatre, together with choreographer Sasha Machov, gave concerts at the Prague artists' union "Umělecká Beseda" and later, when public appearances were continually more dangerous, played for music lovers in their private homes. Then transports started. Gideon was sent to Terezín on December 1st, 1941 with one of the first, the so-called Aufbaukommando AK II. When I was included in a transport to Terezín in May 1942, Professor Kurz passed on the news of my call-up to Gideon through his sister. My transport (Au 1) was mainly sent on East, and only a fraction could be reclaimed by Ak-members, and thus permitted to stay in Terezín. Gideon saw to it that I was one of these, and it is probably to this that I owe my life.

Despite all difficulties and prohibitions existing in camp life, Gideon was very active artistically in Terezín, and helped all his colleagues, too. Often this activity was most risky, and even endangered life under the existing conditions. Terezín had not yet been evacuated by the Czech population, when Gideon managed to find an old piano in the "Sokolovna" gymnasium, which lay outside the ghetto boundaries. This "instrument" stood on two wooden trestles, because it had no legs, and a few keys and strings were also missing. Nevertheless it was a great day for us pianists, to be able to try a few chords again for the first time after many months. When this "piano" was secretly taken to an attic within the ghetto, a few weeks later, Gideon tried to turn it into a usable instrument. The trestles were replaced by three wooden stools, he repaired the mechanism as well as he could, and we started to practice. And this is how our first piano concert was brought about, illegally, on a shabby old grand, in the attic of a ghetto house: it was a Beethoven concert. Professor Bernard Kaff of Brno played the Appassionata, and I, the youngest, the Waldstein Sonata, Gideon the Sonata As Major, op. 110. There were no music sheets yet, at that time, we had to play everything from memory.

But before this Gideon had helped conductor Rafael Schächter to assemble a choir and with the choir practice, and—most important—he wrote music for this choir, as there were no other scores: he adapted Czech and Russian folk songs for three and four voices, later on he composed motets to poems by Hölderlin (which have been preserved). When Rafael Schächter rehearsed the Czech national opera "The Bartered Bride," it was Gideon who did most of the organizational work.

As Gideon was well liked by the cultured and art-loving Council of Elders, he was entrusted with the department of music under the so-called Freizeitgestaltung, when the apparent Self-Government of the ghetto was established. And he used his position to enable artists, both professionals and amateurs, old or young, to develop their talents further. It is typical of Gideon Klein that he always aimed at achieving true art, and that he never made compromises. In this way the string trio was formed: Karel Fröhlich—first violin, Romuald Süssmann—second violin, Freddy Mark—cello. And Gideon Klein composed a trio for this ensemble. Soon after, Heini Taussig, a young and tallented violinist, took over the second violin, Romuald Süssmann now played the viola and the trio became a quartet of high level, for which Gideon also composed a string quartet. Gideon Klein then formed a piano trio, where he played himself, and which was one of the most discriminating chamber ensembles in Terezín, including Beethoven, Brahms and Dvořák in its programme.

After the arrival of the new "Judenältester" Eppstein, who had been allowed to take his grand piano to Terezín, Gideon was also able to continue his development as pianist. Eppstein often had him play before a small circle of guests. There Schumann's phantasy, Brahms, Mozart, Suk, Janáček, rang out in Gideon's masterly interpretation. At the same time he never stopped inspiring his colleagues to the best possible performances. Most of them would have been—especially under the existing conditions—satisfied with their own achievements, but not so Gideon. For his sister Liza Kleinová, for instance, he composed a piano sonata, that has been preserved, and played several times after the war by some of the best Czech pianists. It is a work written in the Spirit of Schönberg and with sincerely felt depth.

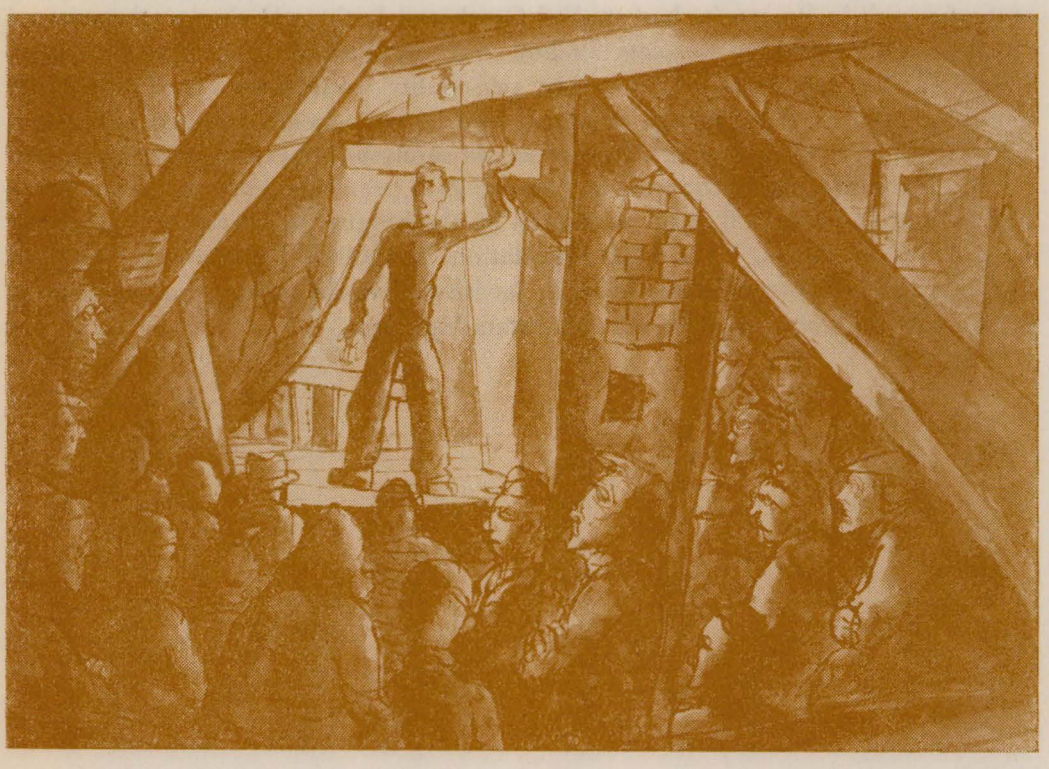
With the establishment of the ghetto—the Jewish Self-Government, which was designed to cover up the Nazi crimes before the eyes of the world—it became possible as part of the "Freizeitgestaltung" legally to hold concerts and opera performances, and there existed a group of active pianists, including Alice Herz, Edith Kraus, Steiner, Aranyi, Professor Kaff, and especially Gideon Klein, who arranged for all the artists, selflessly and objectively, a regular minimum of practice time at the piano. Gideon played almost his entire repertoire: Bach's preludes, the Chromatic Phantasy, Beethoven sonatas, Schumann's Phantasy, works by Brahms, Suk, Janáček, and many more. Later on, when Verdi's Requiem was rehearsed, it was again Gideon who helped conductor Schächter and played the orchestra part rewritten for piano.

All this sounds like routine, but required a deeply human attitude. When the Prague composer Pavel Haas arrived in Terezín, he was a tired, broken man, too exhausted to think of composing. Gideon was not only of moral support to him; he managed to get hold of some paper, and spent many nights lining it for Haas, to encourage him to undertake some new activity. At the end of 1942 Gideon participated in the foundation of the so-called Jugendfürsorge, whose duty it was, in view of the prohibition of classes, to see at least to semi-education of the young people. Gideon was active, wherever culture was concerned.

His was a phantastically many-sided talent. At the very beginning of his stay in Terezín, he organized poetry evenings in the "Hamburg" barracks; the first was dedicated to French poetry in Karel Čapek's translation. This was still illegal at the time and Gideon recited. Another evening brought Czech lyrics. His talent for languages was such, that he learned English and French within a few weeks, and when still in Prague he had studied Greek and Latin. He had a phenomenal memory, and everything was easy for him—on this point all who knew him agree. It is difficult to say how far his artistic personality would have developed under normal conditions. At the age of twenty-two he had already covered a distance, for which a man of average intelligence would surely have needed thirty-five years. Shortly before the end of the war, in January 1945, when the Fürstengrube concentration camp had already been evacuated by the SS-guards, he was shot, together with scores of others, by a Nazi liquidation commando, after having enjoyed freedom for one short moment. Czech, Jewish and world culture thus lost a great personality and the world of music an outstanding talent.

ALENA SYNKOVÁ

RANDOM REMINISCENCES ABOUT A NOBLE MAN



AGAIN I take up the reminiscences of his friends. Their statements. And also lists of books he read, his diaries, notes. All this is bound in a slender volume that appeared in Prague in 1947.

This little book gave only some slight indication of the colourful personality of Gustav Schorsch. Even today his name sounds like a magic charm. Like those moments of exaltation that do not often come to a person in the rush of daily life. Try uttering this name to call up the memories of his smile, his gestures, his words and ideas, his presence. Try uttering this name to a person you seldom see, whom you scarcely know. And if he has ever been close to Gustav Schorsch you need not say much at all—you have found a friend, someone you know intimately, someone close to you through the whole depth of common experience—you have a friend. And, without exaggeration, we could use all the elevated words and there would be nothing forced or stereotyped about it, and then we would find that we have not expressed the strength and charm of the personality of Gustav Schorsch. And if we are overwhelmed by unsurpassable grief at his premature death, let us avoid any improper sentimentality, the jarring note of superfluous verbosity. Still we cannot merely put down the bare facts of his life on paper, nor can we avoid regret at the ending of his life.

Toward the end of 1942, one of the numerous transports of Prague inhabitants of Jewish origin went into quarantine on Letná hill. About a thousand people gathered there, and that is where I first met Gustav Schorsch. I believe I did not notice him very much, because I was there all alone, still just emerging from my childhood years, in a place where I was surrounded by strange people, torn away from my family, from my friends, of whom I had few at the time, and from my whole former life. All of us knew that something bad was awaiting us and so that week, before the transport was loaded on the train and taken to Terezín, was marked by considerable depression of all those present, faced by completely new conditions. And perhaps it was Gustav Schorsch who raised my continually bent and weeping head and encouraged me. Then the rest of the week in quarantine was bearable. Like the others, Gustav Schorsch sat on improvised hair mattresses on the floor and was completely calm. He did not speak about the future, he showed no anxiety or fear, I remember he talked to me about books and his games as a child. He also was alone in quarantine—I do not remember any longer where his family was, and we surely spoke about our families.

His quiet, eloquent voice was always to be heard. I don't believe that he ever said any meaningless consoling words. Probably he spoke about quite ordinary, everyday matters, as if nothing had changed. Perhaps Schorsch did not even take notice of the realities of the situation in which we found ourselves, and that was the greatest consolation he could give. I can still see him before my eyes: dark, slender, wrinkled trousers, a green duvetine jasket that shaded into grey, faded and rubbed under the belt. Of course the most striking were his eyes and his smile. If I were to characterize him in two words it would be: tranquillity and light.

In December 1942 sixty thousand people were crowded into an impossibly small space in the ghetto. Again the transport had to go through quarantine.

Schorsch continued to take charge of his new little niece: he seemed to me an adult and sensible uncle, although he was only twenty-five years old at the time. But he actually was many years older: he knew, he sensed, and understood. I remember very precisely how afraid I became if he left quarantine for a short while and suddenly darkness surrounded me, in a sort of twilight I felt anxiety, with the sound of many voices of people crowded together. People scattered from the ghetto to meet him when they learned of his arrival they had been awaiting. And a sort of light radiated from his every word, his every smile. An uncle, an older brother, this was all combined in him, and the wisdom of age, the eagerness of youth, the vitality of a person who, although he was completely at the mercy of brutal forces, deliberately took no notice. I have never seen so much intensity and love for art, such a staunch belief in life, so much tolerance for people and love for them, despite their weaknesses, and so much understanding, joined with pure reason.

After passing through the Terezín *šlojsky* (reception point, Terezín slang taken from the German schleussen, to sluice away or—here—requisition) Schorsch lived among the others and resisted any sort of "pull" that might have eased his lot. At the beginning he worked as a labourer in the movers' group, and then devoted himself entirely to the theatre and training of young people. He lectured on philosophy, the theatre, literature, and directed theatrical performances under absurd conditions, in small attic rooms in the Terezín ghetto: Gogol's "Wedding," Petr Kühn's "Puppets," and prepared others; he wanted to stage Calderon's "Judge of Zalaméa," brought up to date, of course, and others impossible to list. But that was only one of Gustav Schorsch's many talents. It remained on the margin of my random recollections. I know only that he constantly lived in feverish activity, but was never irritated, nor was he frantic, nor did he over-dramatize life. With all the exhausting intellectual activity under immensely complicated, even quite absurd conditions of existence, he remained very simple, tranquil and aware.

That is how he was, with his tranquillity and his awareness of the fundamental value of man, his sense of truth and absolute condemnation of any sort of pretense. Therefore meeting Gustav Schorsch affected all people like a cleansing shower. I remember how he, who was so fully occupied, never forgot those who needed him. The whole time he was in the ghetto until he left for a larger camp in Poland, he always made time for the people around him—not, of course, from any conventional standpoint or out of sentimentality or the need to solve complicated philosophical questions with them. Considering all the time we were seeing each other in the ghetto to have a chat, I cannot help realizing today that talking with a mere child did not benefit him, that he was the one who gave. It really was with the best of will, it was an act that, for lack of a better term, might be called, under Terezín conditions, a good deed. This was part of Gustav Schorsch's very concept of life, his personality, his way of expressing himself, that he could not pass them by indifferently and without noticing those who needed him. For he himself needed people around him, to give to all his smile, his calm and his unfalsified interest. There was never any hysterics or stereotype in his way of talking, whatever the subject.

If anyone came close to understanding the meaning of human existence, it was Gustav Schorsch. How much more tragic, then, was the contrast of his premature

death. Perhaps this accords with the saying that the best are taken before their time.

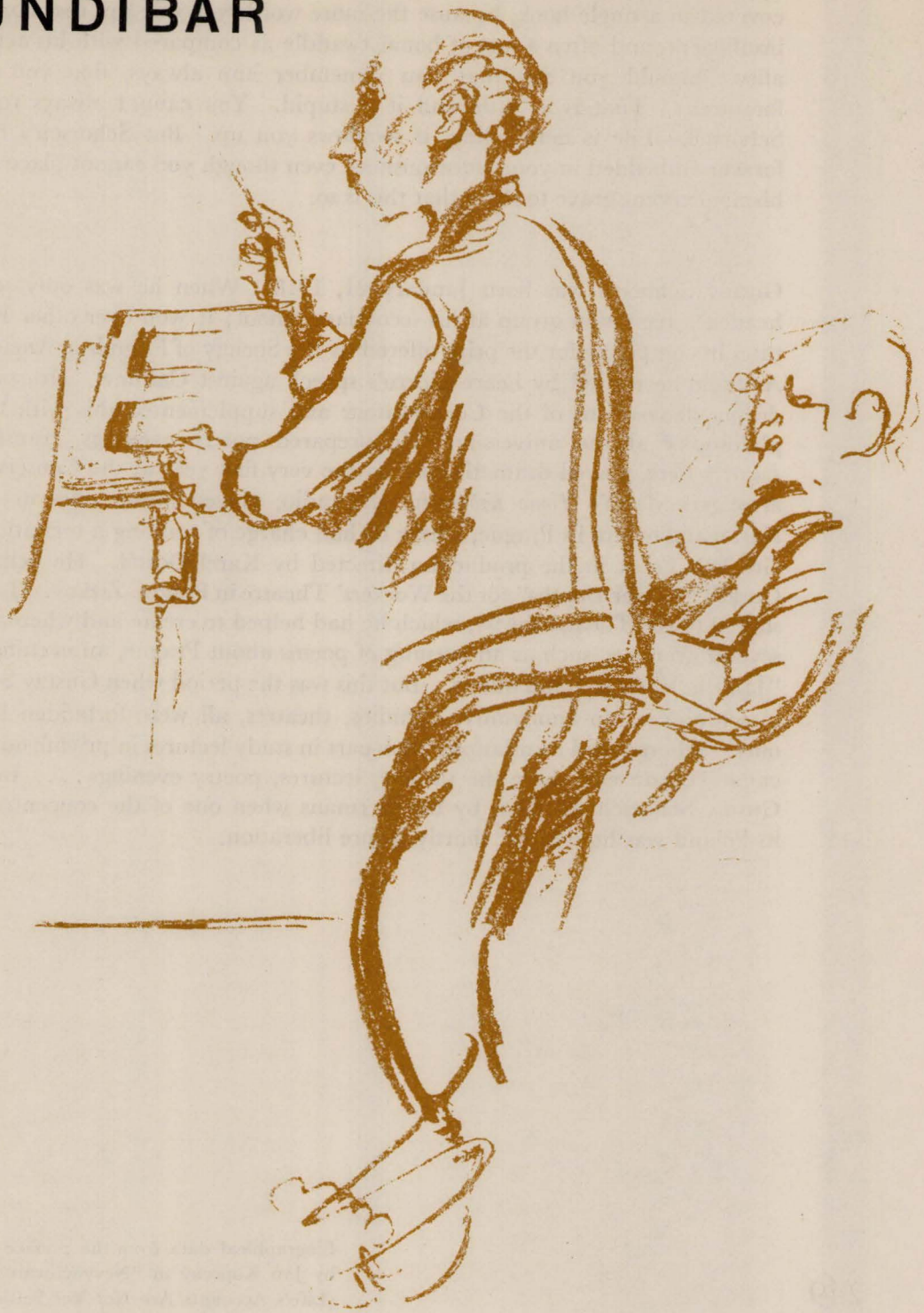
Gustav Schorsch cannot be put into a few lines, nor can meetings with him be covered in a single book, because the more words you pile up, the more they seem insufficient, and often a sort of banal twaddle as compared with his actual personality. Should you say that you remember him always, that you have never forgotten? That is so little and it is stupid. You cannot always recall Gustav Schorsch. Life is demanding, it swallows you up. But Schorsch's memory lies forever embedded in your consciousness, even though you cannot place a pebble on his nonexistent grave to show that this is so.

Gustav Schorsch was born January 21, 1918. When he was only seventeen he headed a recitation group at his secondary school; it won over other Prague institutes in competing for the prize offered by the Society of Friends of Ancient Culture. As a solo he recited by heart Cicero's speech against Catiline. He studied in the drama department of the Conservatory and supplemented this with the study of philosophy at the university. He prepared poetry evenings, translated Titus' *Lucrecia Cara*, played dramatic roles in the very first year at the Conservatory. He arranged Mann's *Tonio Kröger* for the radio, played minor roles in 1939 in the National Theatre in Prague, where he had charge of training a recitation group for Goethe's Faust in the production directed by Karel Dostál. He helped produce Gorki's "Lower Depths" for the Workers' Theatre in Prague-Žižkov. Later activity shifted to the Theatre for 99, which he had helped to create and where he prepared several evenings, such as an evening of poems about Prague, an evening of Hora's "Jan the Violinist" and others. But this was the period when Gustav Schorsch had to withdraw into anonymity. Studios, theatres, all were forbidden him, one by one. Schorsch did translations, took part in study lectures in private homes. Then came Terezín and there the theatre, lectures, poetry evenings . . . In early 1945 Gustav Schorsch was shot by the Germans when one of the concentration camps in Poland was liquidated, shortly before liberation.

Biographical data from the preface
by Jan Kopecký in "Nevyúčtován zůstává život"
(Life's Accounts Are Not Yet Settled)

RUDOLF FRANĚK

BRUNDIBÁR



HOW IT ALL STARTED As the children sang the choral song about the mother, to help little Joe and Ann get some money, I always thought of you, Pavel and Eva, my children, who would be born one day. I thought of you during the song about the mother who stayed at home beside the empty crib, because her children had gone out into the world. I thought of how you would be born in another time, when music and song would mainly serve joy. I hoped. I thought of you, when childish voices sang this tender lullaby with a feeling that children would hardly be capable of under normal circumstances. For music, at that time, was mainly a source of strength.

And here you are. Pavel is eighteen today and getting ready to go out into the world and you, Eva, are already beginning to think of your first dress for your first dancing class. And still I have never yet told you really in full, how it all started with Brundibár. How we played a children's opera in Terezín. How I became a "famous" conductor, and why, even today, when I hear the gentle voices of a children's choir, tears still come to my eyes.

Listen carefully, Eva, it is going to sound like a sad fairy-tale.

It began long, long ago, actually with your grand-father, with my father. He was director of an orphanage, and he was the type of pedagogue that is born only once in several centuries. A real teacher. They all called him "Boss," all those seventy children or more he was in charge of. He was their father, and how many of them he brought up during all those years can hardly be counted.

As a real teacher he was fond of music. He himself had a beautiful voice. He even looked like a bass singer, huge, greyhaired from his early youth, with a strict look and a kind smile. Whoever knew him, loved him. He liked to sing, and when reporters came from the radio one day to ask him to speak about his pedagogical work, he offered to sing instead.

He taught us youngsters to love music, too. We always had a choir at the orphanage. We played and sang, among other things, Čapek's and Křička's "Fat Great-Grandfather" and Paul Hindemith's children's play "Wir bauen eine neue Stadt." Father's great dream, however, was to sing some liturgical songs with a boys' choir. But, since nothing of that kind existed, I had to try to compose it for him. I started to adapt and compose children's choirs in an amateurish sort of way. Then we gaily went to it—he as the first singer, I as the conductor of the children's choir. We rehearsed various choruses and solos for this purpose, for instance "Happiness" by J. B. Förster and Antonín Dvořák's "Biblical Songs." This was actually the beginning of a beautiful children's choir.

During the occupation the girls' orphanage was forced to move in with us. We extended the choir to include girls' voices and went on singing. You know, none of us was allowed out in the street after eight o'clock during the war, and so we were rehearsing several hours daily. Every voice separately and the whole choir together, solos and accompaniment. We also sang Old Man River with my father; he took Robeson's bass part and the children's choir sang the accompaniment.

In July 1941, he celebrated his fiftieth birthday. His former charges arranged a celebration one evening in our gymnasium. Jirka Orten wrote a festive poem and Rafael Schächter brought his singers and musicians. We played and sang everything the "Boss" liked.

That evening we got acquainted with the conductor Rafael Schächter, the composer Hans Krása, the pianist Gideon Klein, Jirka Orten, the great hope of Czech poetry, the Shakespeare translater A. E. Saudek, with architect Zelenka, stage designer at the National Theatre. And this was also the beginning of rehearsals for Brundibár.

Rafík was quick to decide: "You know, don't you, that Hans has written a children's opera together with Hoffmeister, that has not yet been performed? But we'll do it with your children!" This is how it started. Schächter came once a week and rehearsed energetically. He further charged me to rehearse with the children during the week, telling me exactly what to do. I really became his pupil. When he felt like it he taught me harmony, too.

We were very diligent and our work progressed quickly. The children liked the opera from the first time they heard it, both music and text. Both are suitable for children, the music is modern and tuneful, as it should be in an opera.

But we did not finish our work. The first transports came. Rafík went, and so did the children. Krása went, and children followed. Children went. Children went. Transports.

THE FIRST MODEST PERFORMANCE We could not get over the shock for a long time. But times were such that we learned to make intensive use of every moment of released tension during this waiting for the worst to come. At the orphanage, cultural life was at a higher level than ever before. Visitors stayed in the building over night and in the evening we read poetry and plays, or gave concerts at home. When Jewish children were forbidden to receive any kind of education whatsoever, we found work for them in the "homes." In one such home at Hagibor, I started—at first just in fun—to rehearse Brundibár.

Zelenka took charge of the directing and also designed a wonderful set. He put up a fence made out of several boards and stuck three posters on it. On these posters the sparrow, cat and dog were wittily presented. When they sang, the children stuck their heads out through the posters and this solved the director's age-long problem of animals on the stage. We put up the stage in the orphanage's former dining-room. Nothing else was needed. The children were not in the building any more, the orphanage had been turned into a hospital for very old people and those who were unfit for transport.

We had neither score nor orchestra, and it would have been impossible at that time to get either. With great enthusiasm Löffelholz, Berkovič and Kaufman—piano, violin, drums,—played from the piano score. I conducted the performance from a corner near the orchestra.

We could only invite about 150 persons to our hall, and they had to come and go separately, so as not to cause commotion and draw the occupation forces' attention to us. We played twice and with great success.

In July 1943 we also left in a transport. We were allowed to take 50 kilograms of luggage. Naturally we carefully considered every piece. But just as naturally we excluded something "less important" to add the music for Brundibár.

We arrived in Terezín in the afternoon. When the news went through the town that the "Boss" had come, the streets were thickly lined with children before the

receiving station. My father passed through the crowds, happy at the thought to be among his children again. And they welcomed him as one welcomes only people that one loves most—with childish love, in all that misery.
In the evening Rafík put on a performance of "The Bartered Bride" in honour of our arrival: In an attic, only as an oratorium with piano accompaniment. It is a mystery, how that piano got into the ghetto. After the performance I proudly produced Brundibár and we decided then and there that I should start to rehearse with the children.

THE CHILDREN What an inhuman brain it must have been that thought of imprisoning children, guiltless, defenceless children.
And what strength and hope there must have been to start teaching them, to educate in them noble characteristics so that one day, when they should return, they should not lag behind the children "outside" in anything.
They understood that. They started their learning with such energy and enjoyment, that even today it would be worth while to write a paper on "pedagogical problems in the concentration camp." We were able to punish the children, for instance, by temporary exclusion from lessons. School went on in spite of the prohibition against education. One of the pupils was always on guard, and when he noticed danger—the SS-men—he whistled, and teaching turned into mere amusement of the children. We sang and played. That was permitted.
I taught in attic L 417. This was in a bulding that had really been a school before and was now a boys' home. In the attic there were benches from our Prague orphanage and there I taught the fifth class. But that was later. In the beginning everybody who had newly arrived had to work a certain number of hours of compulsory physical work. I went beyond Litoměřice to build a rifle range for the German soldiers. I did 12 kilometers there every day on foot, then on the run with the fully loaded wheel-barrow up, then trotting down, up and down, up and down, then again 12 kilometres back in formation and accompanied by sentries with their bayonets up. I had hardly time to wash when I got back to Terezín, the children were already waiting for me.
We started rehearsals in the attic of the "Dresden" barracks. I got an allocation of one portable harmonium, a pedal case, familiarly called "winds." Joe was played by Pinta Mühlstein and Ann by Greta Hoffmeister, these two already were experienced singers. They had been playing with Rafík in the "Bartered Bride" in the well-known scene with the bear. So Rafael recommended them to me and I started to rehearse the solo parts with them. Oh, what wonderful musicians they were! Greta, I am told, went to Israel after the liberation, where she is singing. The first dog—Zdeněk Ornest—also remained faithful to the theatre. He is an actor at the S. K. Neumann Theatre in Prague-Libeň.
It was May 9th, 1946. There was dancing on Wenceslas Square. The first anniversary of the liberation was being celebrated. And in the crowd I suddenly saw Pussy-Cat—Eva Stein. We danced together, she was already fifteen years old. And during the dance I told her: "Do you know, Pussy-Cat, I have been transferred to your school, and I shall teach you." She sat down on the curb and fell silent. And the only thing she managed to say after a little while was: "And what shall

I call you?" I could never get used to calling her anything else but Pussy-Cat. It must surely have sounded strange at a girls' school. But how could we have explained it to everybody?

I even know a certain game. Do you remember, Pavel? "Bet you, that this lady with the little girl over there will turn round!" Or that gentleman. I whistle a motif from Brundibár and success is ensured. But that would not work with anybody else. Everyone knew Brundibár at Terezín. All the children sang its melodies, everybody went to see it several times. Just you go and ask conductor Ančerl, for instance, how often he took his small son to see Brundibár. We let them into the hall through the backdoor. Whoever could, smuggled in a few more people. The hall was always so overcrowded that it was hardly possible to breathe.

The children were not professional actors, and after many repetitions the play began to bore them. I always had to think up a new attraction. Once the well-known film actor Gerron was in the audience, once the question of the opera's future was raised. But to ensure that the children should never really get bored we always had new transports. Transports from Terezín to death. Every one of them always struck a blow at the Brundibár ensemble.

I meet only a few of the members of the ensemble every now and then. I do not even know exactly how many survived. But you can try it anywhere in the world. Just whistle a motif from our opera, and you will find them. They are sure to come to you.

THE ORCHESTRA When we started rehearsing, it was taken for granted that Brundibár would be played only with piano accompaniment. But suddenly news came that musical instruments would be brought to Terezín. A fantastic "eyewash campaign" was planned for the world. An international Red Cross visit was being arranged which would report on the camp as a model place. And at the time that great changes were being made in the camp, musical instruments arrived, too.

Hans Krása immediately seized the opportunity and wrote out a completely new score from the piano score. He wrote it specifically for the musicians. Every one of them was a master of his instrument and so he "wanted the boys to have something to play." That was a wonderful orchestra. You won't easily find anybody to put one like it together again. Karel Fröhlich, Fredy Mark, Romuald Süssmann, the brothers Kohn, Fritzek Weiss, Gideon Klein. The various scores were very difficult.

But now a new difficulty arose. Who would conduct the orchestra? I had never conducted an orchestra before up to this moment, and the musicians only recognized authority on their own level. Work with the children was finished. During the final rehearsal it was found with pleasure that the children knew their parts so well, even the most difficult places, that their voices did not drop by a hairsbreadth.

"You are going to conduct, I'll teach you!" Rafík finally decided. I went to him for instructions daily. He had his "studio" in cellar L 410. There he sat at a larger harmonium, sang and played and I had to "conduct" him. He had his own way of telling me what to do, and where to put my left "fin" and such-like, but bit by bit he

went through the whole score with me. We marked the entrances, what gestures to use, and he taught me everything a conductor must know.
At the first orchestra rehearsal he went through the whole orchestral part himself first. One could see how he was enjoying himself. How long since he had conducted an orchestra! Then he handed me the baton, went to stand beside me and I conducted. When the children joined in, everything was all right. And thus I also became a Terezín conductor. When older music lovers, some from other European countries, asked me for free tickets, they would say: "Herr Kapellmeister, Sie haben sicher beim Toscanini studiert." "Surely you studied with Toscanini." I answered truthfully that I had never even seen this past master of music. "Das ist nicht möglich. Von hinten sind Sie der ganze Toscanini." "That's impossible From the rear you are Toscanini all over." As I said before, they wanted free tickets.

IN MEMORIAM "HONZA" He was among the real "celebrities." Famous and acknowledged. Wherever he appeared, shouts of "Brundibár, Brundibár" accompanied him. The cooks gave him extra helpings of soup and when in the end he even got to the Judenältester, it was "Was wünschst Du, Brundibár?" "What would you like, Brundibár?" "I should like to work somewhere near the grub, Herr Judenältester." And so he was transferred to the butchers who cut up meat when there was any. That was a place! But he did not enjoy it for long. They called him Sarah, his real name was Honza Treichlinger. He had got his nickname when he was still living in the "Sudeten" barracks. His bunk was near the door and to everyone who left it open he called out, according to some joke or other: "Sarah, shut the door."
We met in the washroom. He came and stood beside me, pretending to wash and then he said: "I hear you are looking for children for your opera. Can I come, too?" We became inseparable friends. We lived on one double bunk in the third "tier." We fixed it like one bed. We even made up our bedrolls together. In the evening he never fell asleep until I had come and told him all the events of the day. We shared everything. My wife Blanka and I had agreed to take him with us after the war and see that he studied. He was an orphan from Plzeň and an aunt had been looking after him. She cared for him splendidly and he loved her like a mother. He referred to her and to Blanka as "my girls."
He actually asked for the part of Brundibár. And again in his own way—"can I have a go at it?" Brundibár is a negative hero. He is a wicked old man, an organ-grinder who does not want to let the children sing for money in the district which he considers his beat. In the end he steals their cap with the collected money. It is a character full of mental conflict for the children. They always had sympathy for beggars and poor people, but this one was wicked, ugly. Honza, quite instinctively, made the character of Brundibár so human, that, although he played a wicked character, he became the darling of the audience, and not only of the children in the audience. He learned to "twitch the whiskers" which we stuck under his nose. He twitched them so well, and at just the right time, that tension relaxed in the auditorium and often we could hear the children releasing their bated breath.

From the moment in which he "made" the character, he played all performances without understudy. Anybody else would have failed.
What might he have become? Actor or engineer? How he could have humanized his own life as he had his role! That he was rather short was fateful for him. He was fourteen years old. He went to Auschwitz with the old and the small children and directly into the gas chamber.

WE WERE NOT AFRAID I am sure Adolf Hoffmeister never thought he would write the book for a children's opera, whose thoughts would in the near future be understood allegorically, and inspire thousands of prisoners . . . With what enthusiasm we sang: "Beat your drum, we have won . . . we did not give in! . . . we were not afraid . . ." Everything could be summed up under the concept of Brundibár. You must face evil. One man alone is helpless. "There should be more of us! The more, the better!"
The thought of the opera is very clear:
Little Joe and Ann need money to buy milk for their sick mother. Nobody will give them anything without money. Both children witness how the organ-grinder is thrown money only because he plays. So they sing a gentle song about little geese. Not only do they get nothing, but the wicked organ-grinder threatens them and chases them away. Night falls. The animals on the posters come to life and give advice to the children. Here many children must get together. They help to bring the children from the nearby school and they sing a moving lullaby. Money is thrown from all sides till the cap is full, but the organ-grinder pinches it. Now a chase starts and the wicked man is caught. Brundibár is defeated . . . we have won.
The first performance took place on September 23, 1943. It was a great occasion. We played in the hall of the "Magdeburg" block. Zelenka again used his stage sets with the wooden fence. Kamila Rosenbaum was the choreographer. The orchestra had to sit in front of the stage. Access to the stage was from the corridor.
Now a caressing look at all the children. A smile, pretending that nothing could happen. Everything will go smoothly. Lights out in the hall! Off we go!

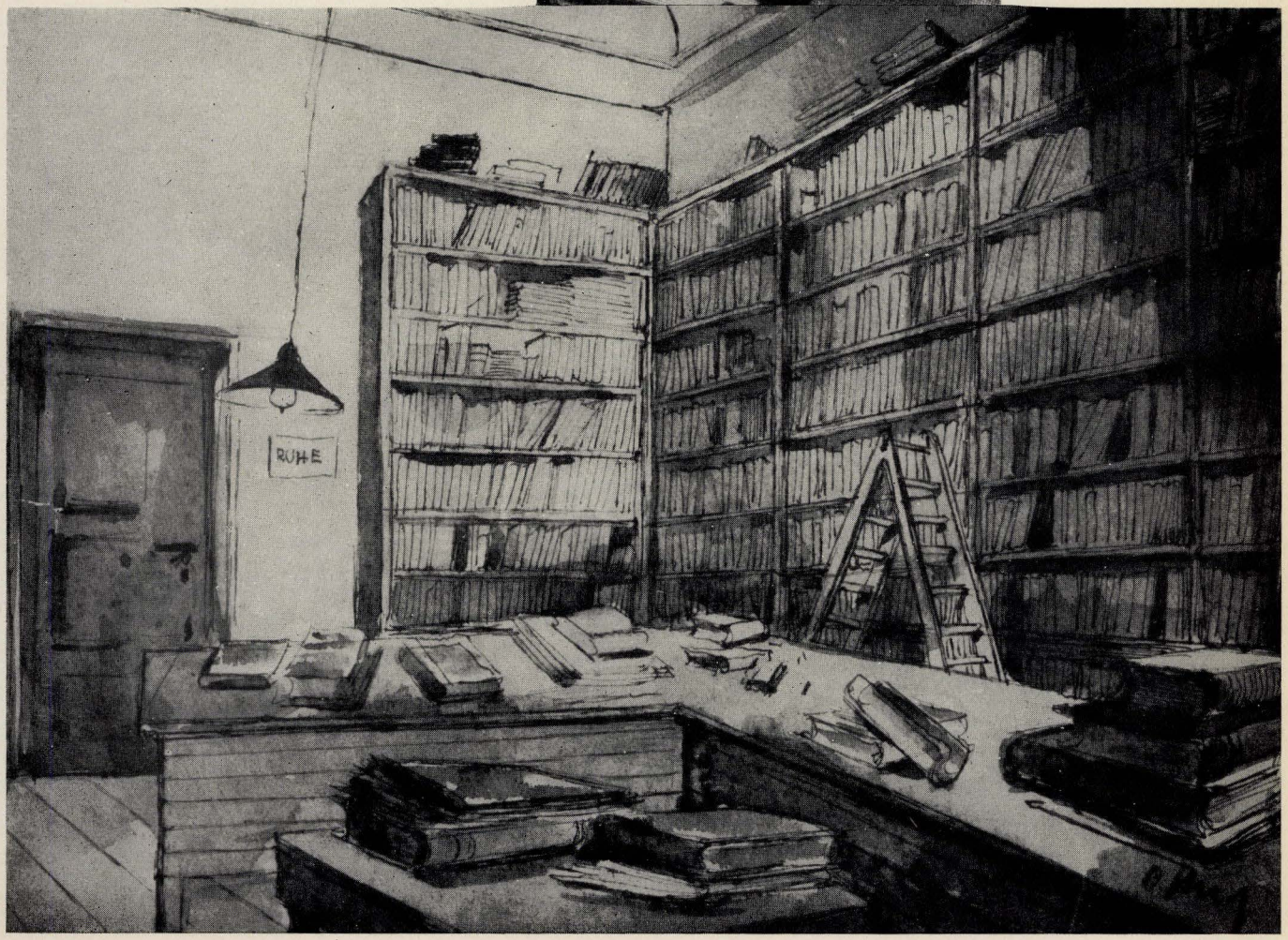
I pass through the small door to the orchestra and at that moment I forget that I am a prisoner. That we are all prisoners. But we forget for a while, all of us, and live through unforgettable moments with the children.
The end of the book runs as follows:
Who so loves
his mother and father
and his native land . . .

Originally orphans played and sang. Some of the children naturally could not even understand the term "native land." They were too small and their "native land" at the time was a concept without content. This is why we changed and strengthened the conclusion without the permission of the author who was already abroad, adding the verses of E. A. Saudek:

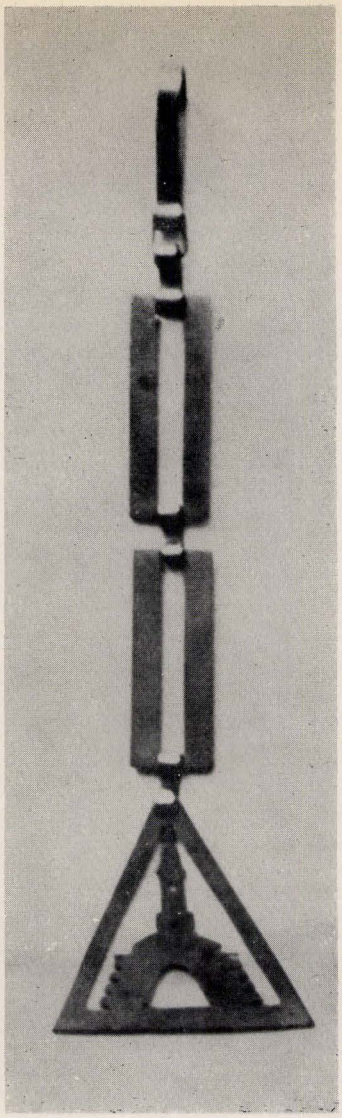
55 Dr. Emil Utitz, university professor (bust)

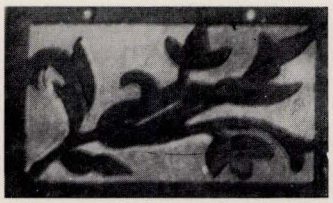


56 The library in the Ghetto (Otto Ungar)









57 Products made by the Ghetto inmates



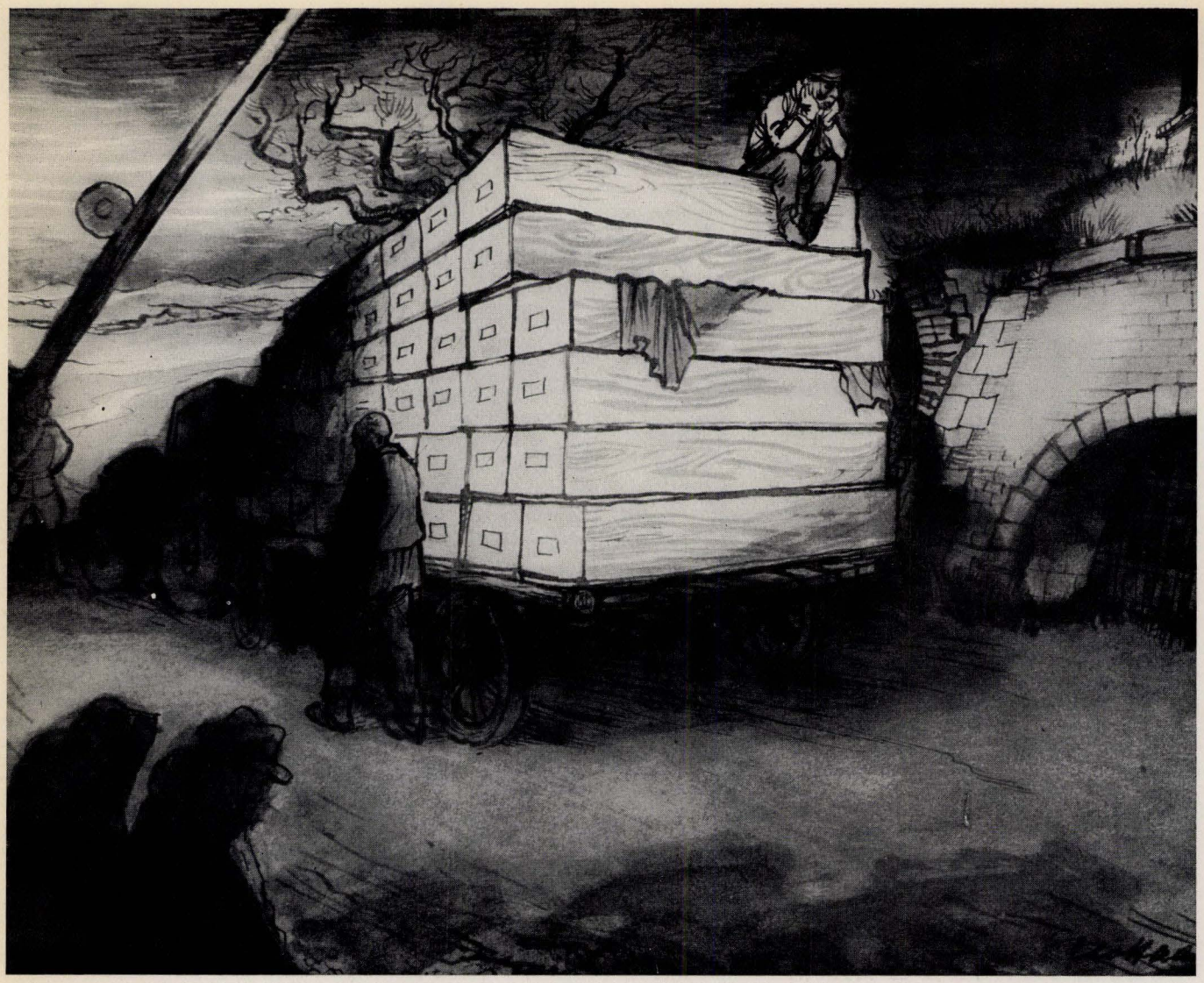
58 Hunger (Leo Haas)



59 The blind (Leo Haas)



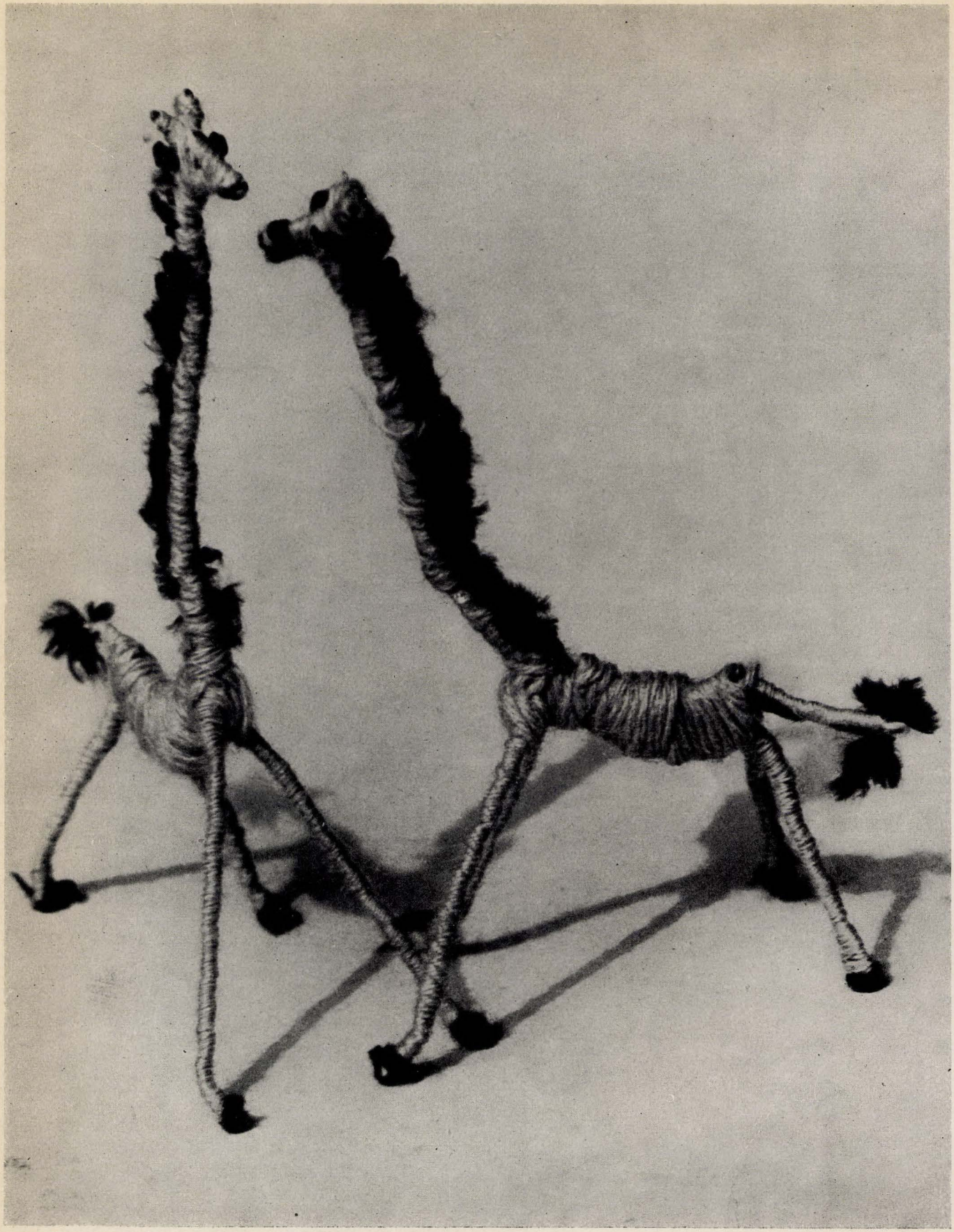
60 The count-out in Terezín on November 17, 1943 (Leo Haas)



61 Mass burial (Leo Haas)







Whoever loves justice
and will defend it
and is not afraid,
is our friend
and may play with us.

And, now, just imagine! The time came for what has possibly been the greatest "Potemkin Village" of recent years. The arrival of the International Red Cross Commission was expected. The "Verschönerungsaktion" was in full swing. Everything was being improved, beautified, but only at some places, where the commission was to pass according to plan. There even the pavements were scrubbed. Window curtains were put up. A beautiful pavilion was built, a crêche and a kindergarten, where activities went on only on the day of the visit. It is said that the children had to crowd round the Lagerkommandant and complain: "Onkel Rahm, wir haben schon wieder nur Butterbrot!" "Uncle Rahm, we got just bread and butter again." Everything was being varnished, painted, polished to pretend non-existent facts.

It was then that musical instruments were sent, a so-called "spa-orchestra" was formed, for which a music pavilion was put up in the square. There a jazz band played under the proud name of the "Ghetto Swingers." I could mention a hundred such paradoxes.

It had also to be decided which of the cultural programmes would be included as a sample. From the whole long list Brundibár was chosen to be produced before the Camp Command.

We had to transfer the opera from the small hall in the barracks to the large auditorium of the Terezín Sokol Hall. At that time this building was out of bounds to us. It had theatre equipment, stage, orchestra pit, cloakrooms, everything we might need.

The day of the performance arrived: the auditorium was quite empty. The choir and orchestra was ready to start.

They came into the gallery, the whole pack of them. They stopped without taking off their caps and the Lagerkommandant gave the usual order: "Los!"

After a few scenes I turned round. All of them were already sitting, none of them stirred, their caps had come off. When the opera ended they did not even want to get up. Even they, these unfeeling cynics, had been touched for a short while by the sweet music. They also had children at home, so they said, the scoundrels. Who knows!

In the evening orders came. Brundibár is to be played. The stage is too dark, not gay enough for the children. By morning a whole town has to be put up behind the wooden fence. All the necessary material, sheets, paints, etc., are to be issued!

We worked throughout the night. Zelenka employed a large staff of helpers and in the morning the sets were finished and in place. A town district including a school —the future.

They decided that the visitors should see the finale. I got the first signal when the car entered the street. The second signal meant that they were mounting the stairs

and at the third signal I dropped my raised hand and the music started to welcome the arrivals. Brundibár is defeated, because we were not afraid . . . we did not give in. According to the stage instructions at a certain moment the children were to raise whatever they had, or rather whatever they should have had in their hands, books, school bags, copy books. But as children are the same everywhere, most of them had forgotten their stage properties. And so they only raised their clenched fists. The visitors are suposed to have liked that.

The visit came to an end. And with it all the advantages brought about by the preparations to receive the visitors. There was still the shooting of a "propaganda film" of which a copy has been preserved. And then everything was forbidden. The largest transports from Terezín were being got ready. And we went with the first.

We played the opera fifty-five times all told.

And in the end we defeated Brundibár. We won. But since that time the children of Terezín have not sung their "gay marching song" any more.





VAVA ŠANOVÁ

FIRE-FLIES



THE THEATRE rehearsal of Karafiát's *Fire-Flies* in the Terezín ghetto in 1943 was a purely pedagogical affair. The tutors and workers of "Child Care" merely wanted to make all the children familiar with *Fire-Flies*. There were only a few copies of the book in existence in the camp, so only children living at the "Home" itself had an opportunity to read it. Furthermore, we wanted to have a theatre performance for the children, being well aware of the fact that the vast majority of children in Terezín had never been to the theatre before. And, finally, the rehearsing of the play with the children simplified at least for a time the problem of how to occupy the children and teach them systematically, when teaching was officially prohibited. Thus *Fire-Flies* also became part of the syllabus for one children's home. The idea of producing Karafiát's *Fire-Flies* on the stage originated with the dancer and choreographer Kamila Rosenbaum before her deportation. Kamila Rosenbaum taught the children eurythmics and at the beginning of 1943 she began teaching the children little dances based on national songs, showing them how to express in movement some of the scenes from *Fire-Flies*, which she read to them from Karafiát's book. After about two months of rehearsals she came and told me that she wanted to produce *Fire-Flies* at the children's home as a dance-play, and that I as actress should read the text. I went to have a look at one of the rehearsals and immediately realized that this was going to be the basis for a children's performance which I had been planning for a long time, for just those reasons stated above. So I decided to adapt *Fire-Flies* for the theatre. I dramatized the book, keeping in mind our possibilities in Terezín. The play was dramatized in such a way that everything took place in one setting and before a back-drop covered with large flowers giving the illusion of a meadow. On this meadow the little fire-fly learned to fly, here he was injured by the children playing and the following scene showed life in their little home, how mother nursed him, then the scene with mother cooking and her little son blowing out the fire, the scene where the fire-flies drew wine from a big grape seed and finally the little fire-fly's wedding that ended the play. I took over directing and started to rehearse. I chose some children from the home for the main parts, but the entire children's home shared in the work. Several children knew the same parts, all the children learned to sing the songs, later on they helped in making the costumes and stage sets.

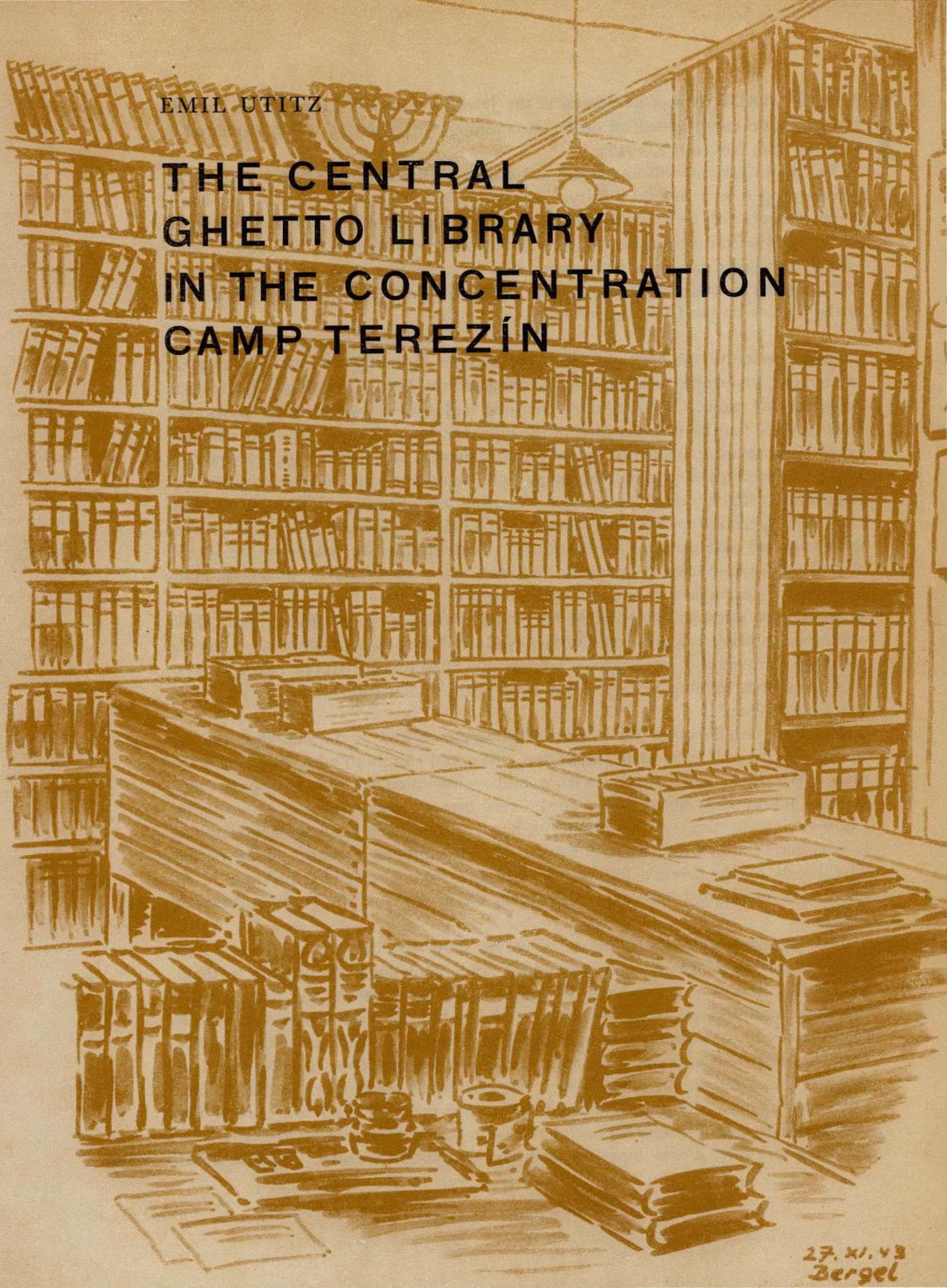
Work was not easy. I had to go very carefully, and there were many obstacles. I myself was employed at the stocking repair shop where I worked ten hours daily in different shifts, so that I could only rehearse early in the morning or late in the afternoon. I limited rehearsals to one or two hours, partly for pedagogical reasons, so that the rehearsals should be a pleasure for the children and not hard work, and secondly, because I had to reckon with the physical weakness of the children, due to malnutrition. Thus, after a few months of what seemed group games, we got far enough that I decided on a public performance. Now a time of feverish preparation began. We had only paper for the sets and old rags to make costumes from. The attendants from the children's home willingly unpicked old clothes and made them over with the help of the children. The children designed the costumes themselves, and Friedl Brandejs, a painter from Austria, supervised the work. The stage designs were made by the painter Adolf Aussenberg. Willing young men painted the sets for us, but everything lasted much longer than we had calculated,

so that when the first performance was announced, I sat up with them the whole night till five o'clock in the morning, to paint large bluebells and sunflowers on paper. Aussenberg himself painted the curtain. When our friends, the electricians, saw our great enthusiasm for the work, they also gave a helping hand. They borrowed spare parts from the power station, set up a rheostat and floodlights and with the aid of coloured paper Franta Pick produced fairy-tale effects on the stage. Karel Schwenk arranged the music based on national songs and accompanied the performance. Thirty children took part. We played on a platform set up in the hall of the "Magdeburg" barracks. The performance—in my opinion—was very good theatre, and we really succeeded in putting on a play in which none of the Terezín shortcomings were noticeable. It had unusual success and was constantly played for all the children. There was not one child in Terezín that had not seen the *Fire-Flies* at least twice. And we had to consider the wishes of the adults, who also wanted to see this really genuine, children's theatre. Thus we played *Fire-Flies* about twenty-eight times, when suddenly the ominously familiar transports again started to be assembled. But we were already so used to this ever-recurring tragedy, that after a fews days, life in camp went on as usual and the theatre played on. Some of our children had departed with the transports and were replaced by others, so that *Fire-Flies* was rehearsed again and again. But new troubles soon came. The "Sudeten" barracks were abolished. That meant that about 4,000 persons had to move within a few hours, and they naturally settled in all empty premises and attics. Our theatre hall was also taken and our men slept on the platform under the blossoming flowers.

Our sets were torn to shreds, we did not know where to put them, every inch in the attics was now taken for living space. We took the sets out and put them in the barracks yard, but after a few days the rain destroyed them completely. That was the end of the *Fire-Flies*—an unforgettable event for all the children.

EMIL UTITZ

THE CENTRAL GHETTO LIBRARY IN THE CONCENTRATION CAMP TEREZÍN



IN THE EARLY days of its existence, the Jewish Council of Elders of the Terezín concentration camp issued an order one evening, the notice of which appeared as Number 256, November, 1942:

"The Ghetto Library will be opened in L304 on Wednesday, November 25th, 1942. It is equipped as a mobile library. According to the number of books on hand, boxes of books will be loaned to buildings, or for stewards of the buldings or houses. At first only a limited number of boxes can be put in circulation, in any case. Individual borrowers can only be persons who have special interest. These persons will be given special permission by Dr. Emil Utitz, who has been appointed head of the library by the Central Secretariat."

This was, so to say, the hour of birth of the library. It had been awaited with great excitement, for people were literally starving for any kind of reading. There were no papers or radio. True, almost everyone had packed two or three books, but most of these had been confiscated at the entrance to the camp. The few who had saved their treasures soon ran out of reading matter, since their supplies were not large. Thousands of sick and old people, who could not leave their miserable dwellings after twilight, longed especially for exciting and cheering things to read. Finally, the special departments—doctors, technicians, agriculturalists, etc., were to be supplied with appropriate literature. Furthermore, the whole lecture system, as well as the youth training program could not exist without books. So a book-planning centre was no luxury, but an urgent necessity.

It should be stressed immediately that really satisfactory conditions were never achieved, and that this was completely beyond the bounds of possibility. I am not speaking here of the incorrigibles who made nonsensical requests, as if it were a metropolitan lending library. But even justified demands could be filled only to a limited extent.

The unique peculiarity of our wonderful library consisted in the fact that we had no immediate influence on its expansion. We had simply to take what was delivered. We did, indeed, express wishes, and we assumed the right to repeat them. But our power went no further. In the very first account rendered we wrote, for example: "Unfortunately, the supplies on hand in the Czech language are completely insufficient and incapable of satisfying the most modest demands of the public. The heads of the library found this shortage to be especially pressing." All documents mentioned here can be found in the archives of the Jewish Library in Prague.

The very considerable figures on our situation show very little. Our accounts were designed for the German camp command, and psychologically pitched to them. The library had to be comprehensive and have a lively turnover, in order to justify the whole undertaking. On the other hand, the library could not be too large or too intensive in the administration, or this would lead to a prohibition of its activity, with the short reason given that it was too much for the Jews. So we served up statistics that we took out of our hats. Particularly clever at this was Mr. Slonitz, a Prague engineer who, sad to say, did not survive the time of terror. At any rate our imaginative figures were successful at least in that they never were rejected.

Speaking seriously, it was impossible to arrive at reliable statistics. Should we list

perhaps the many thousand prayer books that we simply gave away to any who were interested? And with every transport an indeterminate number of books got lost, of course. The unlucky victims did not think of returning the books they had borrowed. Basically we were glad if they took reading matter with them on their horrible journey. Similarly all the books that we delivered to hospitals, old people's homes, or the Youth Care institutions were lost. But the fact is that we saved over 100,000 books and brought them back to Prague. More about this later.

The whole way and means of the library cannot be judged at all by peace-time criteria. They must be seen according to the special conditions of concentration camp life. Under normal conditions the catalogue of books received is the main thing. It is true that we kept promising to prepare one, but we strove mightily to see that our efforts never got past the initial stage. We never accomplished more than enough to present in case of a check up. We had not the slightest interest in putting in writing the fact we also carried forbidden books or that we supplied the Youth Care teaching activity, for this was strictly forbidden. We had to look up reliable people whom we could entrust with dangerous reading and did not care to post this for anyone to read. The less bureaucracy the better. But for outward appearance we had to maintain the illusion of a very widely branched bureaucracy.

All this was possible only under the assumption that the leading co-workers should devote themselves to their tasks with full understanding and awareness of responsibility. I have just mentioned Mr. Slonitz. I must name further the unusually talented Viennese Hugo Friedmann, who is today also numbered among the dead, and the native of Hamburg, Käthe Goldschmidt, who was true to the end—she worked three months after liberation and dedicated her great organizational abilities to the library until she was completely exhausted.

With the shortage of appropriate books, we had to look for some sort of book substitutes. Readers were appointed to hospitals and old people's homes. The Prague University professor Dr. Arthur Stein had been of great service in working out a plan for this system. But the reading service was not enough, either. The many thousand sick and old people had to be cheered. Then we had the idea of bringing cabarets to the different sick wards and rooms. But this idea would have been fruitless if I had not had the luck to find Mrs Myra Strauss, the daughter-in-law of the composer Oskar Strauss. Myra Strauss threw herself into the task with enthusiasm. She put a small troop together and they went from one ward to another. It was really moving to see how a breath of cheerful festivity was brought into those places of misery and suffering. And how difficult and dangerous were the conditions under which Myra Strauss worked! She did not draw back from the vermin and infectious diseases, from the stuffy, stinking air of the over-crowded rooms. She went everywhere, and everywhere the charm of her winning, warm personality triumphed. It is a duty to commemorate this quiet heroine, to whom thousands owe thanks. All the more so, since she became a victim of the evil times.

I turn from personal appreciation to the purely factual again. The camp command had seldom troubled us, not only because we had worked on it psychologically, but also because they were thoroughly uneducated. The whole library system was an alien world for them, where they felt strange. One time, for instance, they came

to us with the demand that we compile a comradeship library, according to a list that they had had sent from Prague. We cut the number of books we delivered by half, stating that most of the books had lice and infection. The idea of disinfecting the books did not occur to them. The day the Germans withdrew we rushed immediately to the camp command and found the comradeship library exactly as it had been when we presented it. And so the German regarded our entire work in general as a kind of cultural decoration that fundamentally did not interest them.

For us, however, it was bitterly serious to supply the camp with spiritual fare. And another point of view guided us also. Our stocks were inappropriate for the most part to fill the purpose, primarily because of a lack of works of fiction. But, to compensate, we had over 10,000 valuable Hebrew works and also some very rare literature. From the very beginning it was clear that we had the obligation to save such treasures for the future. We tried to arrange them properly and in this Dr. Otto Muneles, the present head of the Jewish Library, a Hebrew scholar of undeniable capability and knowledge, was of special assistance. We even set up a so-called Hebrew Room as a sort of museum: decorated with old religious objects. Thus we complied with the requirements of making a show and at the same time isolated the valuable stocks of books and in this way put them in a safe place.

The question comes up whether these formalities were at all necessary: merely storing the books would have been just as advantageous. It is characteristic of the conditions in Terezín that this simple way was not expedient. Completely aside from the miserable state of the camp, the library was broken into, more than twenty times. Books were popular goods, and the culprits were never discovered, so a kind of sport grew up, to break into our premises. We could demand that we have a proper room with a strong door that could be locked securely only if we made an attractive proposal to the Council of Elders. We had to use a psychological approach in dealing with them, too.

Other troubles arose with works of fiction. Our selection was more than paltry. The ordinary circulation would have emptied the shelves in a day. Therefore we seized on the method of house libraries. Each building received a tiny library. There was to be a brisk circulation of borrowed books among the residents. Loans to individuals could come into consideration only for special study purposes. The lines were not pitilessly drawn, however, as shown by the fact that more than three thousand special permissions were given, with young people and heavy workers given special priority.

Finally came the hour to disband, thanks to the victorious Soviet Army. Now began the liquidation of the camp. We took charge of the proper packing of our stocks of books in many hundreds of boxes. So 100,000 volumes were returned to Prague, whence the majority had come. Here ends the short, and yet so long, history of this unusual library. The books with the stamp "Ghettobücherei" will, however, recall this library again and again throughout the decades or, perhaps, centuries.

CHAPTER VIII

OUT AND AWAY FROM TEREZÍN

HOW THEY SUFFERED AND DIED
Dr. Jan Merell, D. Th.

IN THE SMALL FORTRESS OF TEREZÍN
Dr. Miloš Bič, D. Th.

GOODBYE, TEREZÍN / Dr. Jindřich Flusser, M. D.

ESCAPE FROM THE GHETTO / Evžen Hilar

TESTIMONY ABOUT AN ESCAPE FROM TEREZÍN
Otto Kohn

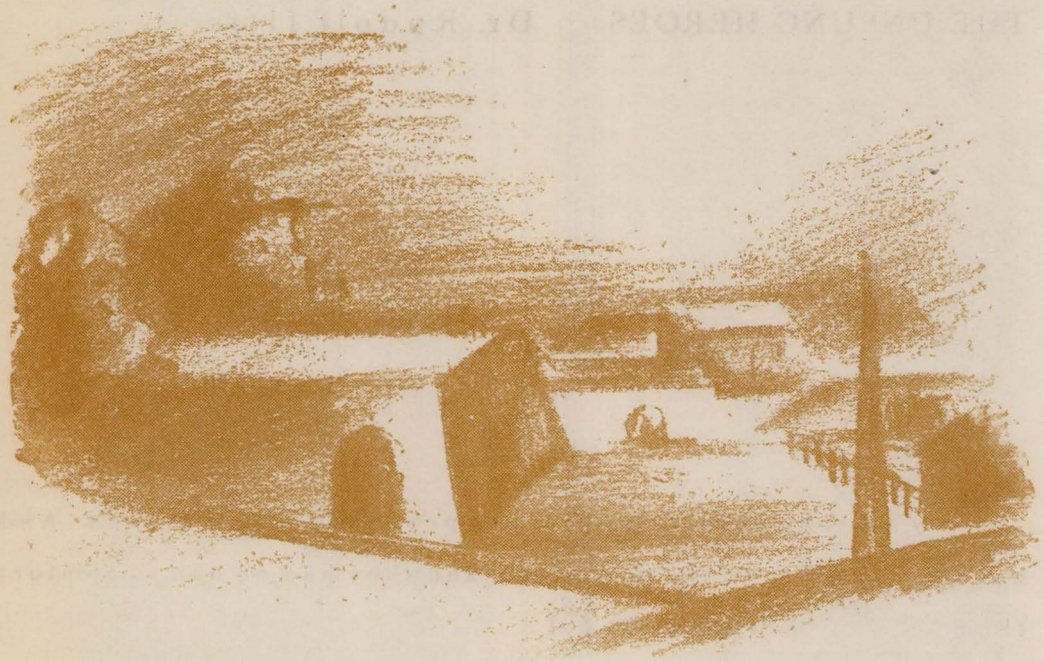
THE UNSUNG HEROES / Dr. Rudolf Iltis

...I saw all the oppressions that are practiced under the sun. And behold, the tears of the oppressed, and they had no one to comfort them! Ecclesiastes 4:1

Dr. JAN MERELL, Th. D.

HOW THEY SUFFERED AND DIED

A Catholic priest testifies to the sufferings of the Jews in the Small Fortress of Terezín.



THE TOWN of Terezín was composed of two parts, the town itself, which was a fortress up to 1882, and the Small Fortress on the right bank of the river Ohře, about ten minutes' walk from the main fortifications, that is, from the town of Terezín that was turned into a ghetto by the Nazis. The view of the Small Fortress, surrounded by trenches that could be flooded from the river Ohře at times of danger, of the walls of ashlar stone and burnt brick, the small, barred windows of the cells, was gloomy. But the history of the Small Fortress is still gloomier. Very soon after its construction was completed, it served as a military and later also political prison. In 1823 the Greek revolutionary Alexander Ypsilanti, who fought for the liberation of the Greeks from Turkish oppression, was imprisoned there. In 1856, Anna Rosická, who had fought for the rights of the Polish inhabitants of Galicia, died there. The Bosnian revolutionary Hadji Loya Salitch Effendi, one of the leaders of the Bosnia rising of 1878, was imprisoned there from 1878 to 1883. From 1914 to 1918 political prisoners from Bohemia and other parts of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy were imprisoned there. Princip, Gabrinovich and Grabesh, the three main persons involved in the assassination of Arch-Duke Franz Ferdinand, died in the Small Fortress. The sad history of the fortress reached its climax during the Nazi occupation. In June 1940, the Prague Gestapo took over the Small Fortress and established an auxiliary prison there to relieve pressure in the Prague police prison of Pankrác. The Small Fortress thus became the first concentration camp in the Czech lands, to which another one was added in November 1941, the town of Terezín, which had been "adapted" as a concentration "ghetto." The life of the Jews in the ghetto was no bed of roses, but woe betide those who, for some reason or other, got inside the Small Fortress.

I should like to describe here some of my own experiences at the Small Fortress of Terezín. Some shattering memories of Jews who were deported there, never to return alive. Jews who left the ghetto for the Small Fortress were singled out for death, so that only we, who left the Small Fortress alive, can raise our voices to testify to their sufferings. The Small Fortress was a transit station between detention and prisons or concentration camps, so the prisoners did not usually stay there long. I myself, however, spent fourteen months there, so that I had a better opportunity than most to witness the inhumanity and bestiality of the Nazis in the prisons, and especially towards Jewish prisoners.

The autumn of 1943 was pleasant and sunny. In the last days of October, after several weeks' imprisonment at the Pankrác prison and torturing at the headquarters of the Prague Gestapo, I was sent to the Small Fortress. Straight away on the day after our arrival we were sent to the so-called "Baukommando," to the entrenchments where the infamous Fourth Court was being erected and the old fortification walls pulled down. And here I witnessed cruel treatment meted out to the Jews which, maybe because it was my first shattering experience of this kind, I can see in my mind to this very day. Not far from the group of Czech political prisoners a group of Jews was working. They were pulling down the old fortification walls. It seemed to SS-guard Soukup, the chief of the Baukommando, that work was not advancing quickly enough. He ordered a group of about ten Jews to undermine part of the walls, the other group worked on top of the walls. Then there was an explosion and the falling brickwork and mortar buried those poor souls in

the pit. It was indeed a terrible sight! The groans of the buried, the laughter and shouting of the SS-men, and their main concern that, not the victims, but their pick-axes and spades should be saved. The half-dead victims were taken on a wheel-barrow to the Jewish cell, or directly to the morgue. The bodies of the wounded were thrown cross-wise on the wheel-barrow so that their heads knocked against the ground during transport and every one of them died because his head was broken before he reached the cell.

The Jewish Cell! The visitor to Terezín may see it to this day. But not even the liveliest imagination can picture this tiny cell of 16 square metres, with two buckets for excrements, where as many as fifty people could be squeezed in. They were not able to lie down and so they had to sleep sitting on their heels after a hard day's work and no food. No wonder that not a day passed without one or more Jews being found dead when the cell was opened in the morning.

In any case, this conformed with the instructions from the Prague Gestapo. Jewish prisoners either came to the Small Fortress straight from the Gestapo, or were sent from the Terezín ghetto as punishment for having violated the camp regulations with the comment RU (Rückkehr unerwünscht or "not recommended for return"). This order was complied with by the infamous Fortress Commander Jöckl with sadistic pleasure. SS-man Storch was his right-hand man. His place of work, the so-called "Storchkommando" on the western side of the Fortress, where a muddy ditch was being filled up, was the scene of many crimes. He followed Jöckl's instructions, that at least two Jewish prisoners had to be brought back dead from the Kommando every day. He particularly enjoyed throwing them into the river or into the cesspool, at other times he forced Jewish prisoners to lick a spade full of pig dung and held their heads to the spade until they did so. Or at still other times he beat old Jewish prisoners, who were not able to push the wheelbarrow fully loaded with earth, until they were unconscious. Then he had them put into the darkroom, where they were immersed in ice-cold water until they died. Jewish prisoners with serious injuries, broken bones or ribs, had to work without medical care. From December 1943 onwards, no medicaments were issued to the prison sick-bay. Only sometimes one of the doctors among the prisoners would manage to help them or smuggle some medicaments to them.

One of Jöckl's favourite pastimes was to watch the Jewish prisoners at boxing matches which he forced them to undertake. Once I witnessed a cruel scene. We were coming back from work on the railway in Ústí on the Elbe. A group of Jews were returning from work elsewhere. Jöckl ordered two of them to box instead of having supper and rest after a full day's strenuous work. One of them sank to the ground before he was hit. This so enraged Jöckl that he whipped him with the cat, knocked one of his eyes out and told the guard that he did not want to see the prisoner again. By evening the prisoner had been beaten to death. Near the morgue was a ditch through which a muddy inundation canal ran. Here Jöckl held "matches" every now and then. Thus in September 1944, several Jewish prisoners were driven into the ditch below the morgue, given sticks and pitchforks and had to fight for their lives. These "human fights" were observed from the little bridge near the morgue by Jöckl and the other guards. Their satanic laughter could be heard as far as the adjoining First Court, where our cell was. Once he had two Jews driven

into the ditch and ordered them to fight until one of them succeeded in drowning the other. Once the Jewish cell received orders, that one of the prisoners had to be hanged by morning. It was left to the cell inmates to make their choice.

The Nazi sadists were past masters both in physical torture, as well as in debasing human dignity, self-respect and religious convictions. During roll call the Jews had to report as "Stinkjude Jude" or "Saujude." Before execution or drowning they had to pray, accompanied by the cruel laughter of the SS-men. At other times the SS-guards accompanied their beating of Jews with sneering and blasphemous shouts of "Jehovah." No kind of physical or mental torture seemed to escape Nazi inventiveness and cruelty.

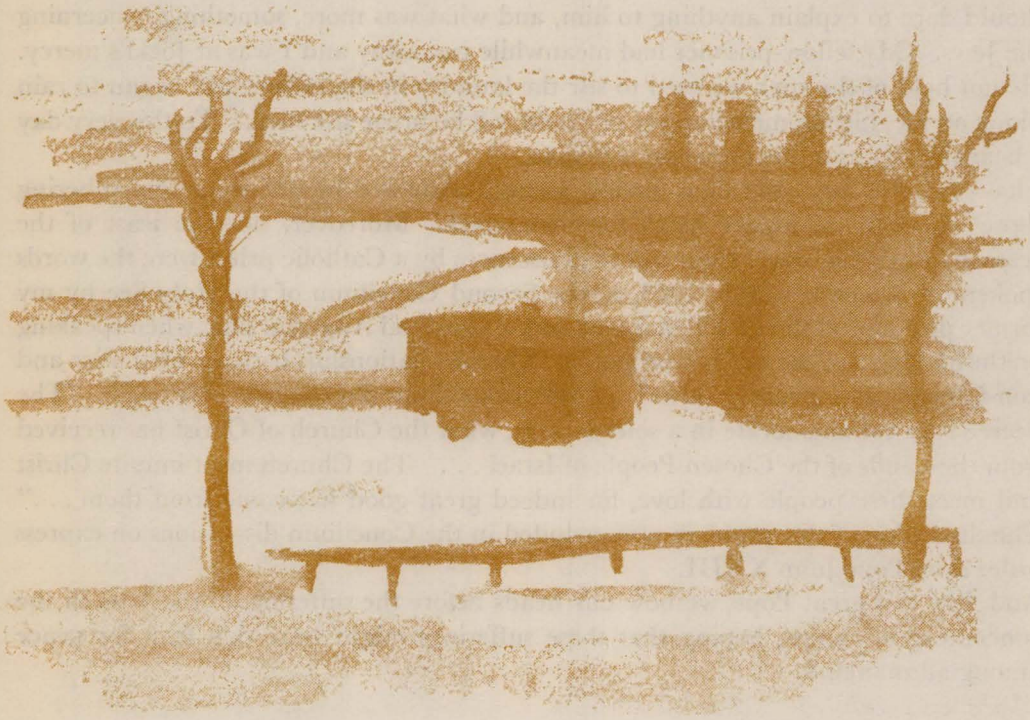
I shall never forget the emaciated, physically and mentally exhausted figures of the Jews destined for death, whose sufferings we were only rarely able to lighten. Sometimes, a fleeting, compassionate glance from us may have been of some comfort to them. I myself carry with me the sad memento of some small help to my Jewish fellow-sufferers, which I should like to mention here. I worked for rather a long period of time at the camp laundry. Once we secretly took over some vermin-infected Jewish laundry to be washed. It was not surprising, considering the inhuman conditions under which the Jews lived, that they should suffer from vermin. A fellow prisoner and myself were transporting this lot of laundry on a little cart. As misfortune would have it, the cart suddenly overturned, and what was still more unfortunate, the infamous Jöckl saw us. He came running to see what was going on, and when he found out that we were carting Jewish laundry which we were not allowed to wash, he began to curse us. I protested, saying that the laundry was vermin-infected, which meant a possible threat of epidemics to the entire camp. This was too great courage and cheek in Jöckl's eyes, that a prisoner should dare to explain anything to him, and what was more, something concerning the Jews. My fellow-prisoner had meanwhile run away and I was at Jöckl's mercy. He got hold of the stick we used to stir the laundry in the boilers and began to rain blows on me, hitting me wherever he could, till he broke the stick. To this very day I bear the results of the blows on my spine.

I have recalled here only a few terrible scenes I witnessed myself, when remembering those who can no longer speak for themselves. Moreover, not the least of the reasons for writing down these sad reminiscences by a Catholic priest were the words spoken on November 20th, 1963, at the Second Concilium of the Holy See by my former professor of the Old Testament, today Cardinal Augustin Bea, when speaking on the inclusion of the outline proposal: "On the relationship between Catholics and non-Christians, especially Jews" in the Concilium discussions. He said: "The decree is to commemorate in a solemn way, what the Church of Christ has received from the hands of the Chosen People of Israel . . . The Church must imitate Christ and meet these people with love, for indeed great good has come from them . . ." The discussion of this problem was included in the Concilium discussions on express order from Pope John XXIII.

And, like this great Pope, we bow our heads before the sufferings of the Jews in the concentration camps, hoping that these sufferings might bear rich fruit for peace among all mankind.

Dr. MILOŠ BIČ

IN THE SMALL FORTRESS OF TEREZÍN



I CAME to the Small Fortress of Terezín in the autumn of 1943, after more than three years' imprisonment. You get to know quite a few things during such a time, you get used to a lot, you learn to watch out and dodge blows, but there is one thing that you will never understand and that is, how it is possible for man to betray his human dignity as the members of the Gestapo and SS did. From Terezín I continued my pilgrimage still further to the concentration camps of Buchenwald and Dachau. That was five years of schooling that one cannot forget and it is indeed a mercy that terrors you have experienced do not pursue you in all their horror throughout your life.

My most shattering memories go back to my stay in the Small Fortress of Terezín. Closed in by the walls and mounds of the fortifications, separated from the rest of the world, we were only a little safer when the SS-men locked us into our cells. There was nowhere in the camp where we could hide from them, not during work, not during the few hours of free time they sometimes left us on a Sunday afternoon. It was not advisable to meet those that walked through the camp. It was risky to run across to a comrade living in different quarters. And it was quite out of the question to speak for or even do something for somebody who bore a special mark or was singled out for a special destination. The former were the Jews, noticeable from afar because of the yellow star on their breast and their starved-looking appearance. The latter were especially those poor souls singled out for extermination whom camp-commander Jöckel in fits of sadism let die of starvation in solitary confinement or dark cells. And we saw others being led to execution, and we heard the reports of the execution squad . . . It is bad when you awaken hungry, without any chance in the near future of eating your fill, it is bad when you are reduced to a slave without any rights, who has to suffer the shouting and insults of his cruel and vile keeper, but worst of all is the feeling of helplessness, when you must patiently look on as others are being tormented and tortured and even beaten to death. And we had to look on without being able to help . . .

The worst treatment was meted out to Jews. They even received orders sometimes to fight one another and were not allowed to stop until one dropped dead. It is a sad fact that everyone fought hard to save his own skin. I myself was not an eye-witness of such a fight, but reports about them were one of the first things that I heard after my arrival in Terezín. About other brutalities I was told by the man who committed them on the Jews himself. He was a boy of about eighteen; his name was John. The SS-men appointed him kapo (leader) of the Jews work group. It was one of his special tasks to kill some Jew every day. He usually chose his victims himself and then he drowned them in the stinking drain passing by the Small Fortress, or he kicked to death those who had been intentionally buried while they were clearing away parts of the walls and had managed to free themselves from the heaps of earth. They were working in the so-called Storch command, of which more will be said later. I happened to be included in the same transport as John, leaving the Small Fortress for Buchenwald at the beginning of 1944. Nobody knew the pale, shy boy that suddenly appeared among us. (The SS-men had lately kept them isolated and in single confinement.)

In Buchenwald, where there existed a prisoners' self-government as there did in all other concentration camps we came into contact with the inmates for the first

time. Questioning started—and we were amazed! In Buchenwald John's name was extremely well known. And his deeds, too. He did not deny anything, it would not have helped him, in any case. The previous transports had brought reliable reports from Terezín. By evening John did not live any more. In Buchenwald we added one more experience to our store: In this camp the prisoners did not hesitate in settling accounts with traitors. But that did not help the poor creatures that John had on his conscience. They had died a terrible death. John was better off in this respect. They gave him an injection in the "infirmary" and maybe he did not even know that it was fatal.

But let us return to Terezín. At one time I worked in the "Baukommando" under the supervision of the stupid and sadistic guard Soukup. The construction of new mass cells and solitary confinement cubicles on the eastern side of the Small Fortress were under preparation, where the so-called fourth yard was being erected. Three priests belonging to three churches met during this work: Associate Professor Merell, at present Dean of the Faculty of Divinity in Litoměřice, with whom I was imprisoned in Dachau when liberation came, then Hodík, a clergyman of the Czechoslovak Church, who perished in Buchenwald, and I, who had been a pastor of the Church of Czech Brethren in Domažlice. We were a nice brotherly trio, had to work hard, it is true, and constantly to be on the look-out. There was no time left for talk but we understood each other in few words, though we were from different camps. Close to us the infamous command of the Jew-baiter Storch worked. They were adjusting and extending part of the walls by digging. One day about fifteen new Jewish prisoners appeared there. They had just been brought from the ghetto, where some affair or other had again come to light. I am told that a goose had been bought on the black market. A few SS-men came together with the Jews, youngsters, cruel and vile. They amused themselves by making the Jews work at the run. On the uneven ground and with their wheelbarrows laden with earth this was bad for the people who were not used to such work. I saw the wheelbarrow being pushed by one young Jew who, by the looks of him, had never handled an implement heavier than nib and pen; it turned over and the clay tumbled out. He wanted to make good his mistake and was quickly loading the soil back with his hands. But an SS-man hurried up and ordered him to load his wheelbarrow with his mouth. That joke went on for a long time until finally they called another Jew who finished the loading with a shovel. In the meantime other guards amused themselves by throwing an older Jew together with his wheelbarrow from the tip where the earth was being tipped. They were highly delighted to watch his efforts at climbing the slope and pulling up the wheelbarrow. Some of them stood at the edge of the slope and knocked him off his balance with bits of bricks when he finally managed to climb up. At last he got to the top, but a new chase started. The SS-men used him as a target, hitting him with bricks, and baited him so much that in the end in desperation, he threw himself down on the side where we were digging the foundations for the future cells. He fell from a height of several meters, landing in front of my feet, covered with blood and unconscious. I did not realize at all at that moment, that, according to the SS-men's evaluation, he was nothing but a "Stinkjude." I only saw a human being, possibly seriously injured, I heard his groans. I put aside my spade, wanting to raise him. It was very dangerous in the camp to show some

solidarity for the Jews, but I did not think of that at the time. But I was too weak and was not able to lift the unconscious man, who was lying all twisted up in a narrow ditch. I only turned him round so that he should not lie with his face in the earth. And then something unexpected happened. One of the SS-man ordered another Jew to help me drag him out. It caused us a lot of work, but we managed it in the end and pulled him a few steps further on. There some of the others revived the poor fellow by pouring some buckets of cold water over him—it was October, and already very cold. He did not come to work with the others the next day. I know no more about him, but as the Jews at that time were no longer entitled to treatment in the sickbay, he could only be alive and active, or dead. I did not see him among the living . . .

I was only a short time in the Small Fortress (three months), and so I saw less than those who were there longer. They have a greater right than I to give evidence of what they saw. Much has already been written about the Large Fortress, the ghetto. But less has been written about the Jews in the Small Fortress. When the Jews did not perish there, they ended in the gas chambers of Auschwitz. Except for those who got to the Small Fortress towards the end of the war and lived to see the liberation, hardly any of the Jews stayed alive who had in former years passed through the Small Fortress. This is why the whole world should hear at least the evidence of those who can describe the sufferings of the others that can no longer talk. What went on in the Nazi concentration camps belongs to the darkest chapters in the history of mankind and will remain forever a stain on the history of the twentieth century. It is up to all men of good will to finally take each other by the hand—despite all differences that might separate them—as we did that time when we were imprisoned, that never again may any of those horrors, that we had to live through during the last war, be repeated.

Dr. JINDŘICH FLUSSER, M. D.

GOODBYE, TEREZÍN



THE GERMAN REICH liked numbers, numbers meant order— "Ordnung muss sein." With a number around their necks, on their packs, on their suitcases, 50 kilograms per person, they were brought from Prague to Terezín, to the ghetto. Three years later, at the beginning of May 1944, with a number round their necks, on their suitcases, on their packs, they assembled for transport to the East. The train was ready at the siding. Two thousand five hundred of them were waiting there, ranged according to numbers. That was half the transport. The others, according to the usually well informed, were to follow two days later.

They had buried Grandmother in Terezín. Even here she had smiled when they had put her and her two suitcases into an attic, together with fifteen other old grannies. Above her head, on the wall, there was a shelf, knocked together by her grandson George, who had stolen the planks for it. There, all her belongings hung on five nails. She had smiled to the last.

Jitka's mother was taken from Terezín in September, 1943. When they heard that she had been included in a transport to the East, George had said to Jitka: "There are five of us. Your mother, my parents and you and I. If we volunteer to go with your mother, we might stay with her—but I rather think that we shall be separated. My parents will stay in Terezín, but not for long. They will leave with the next transport. Left by themselves they will perish. I do not think it would be right to volunteer to go with your mother. But if you go with her, I shall come too."

Jitka did not cry, actually he had never seen her cry. Not even that night in November 1941, when they had learned that he and his parents had been listed for the next transport from Prague to Terezín. It was a week before their wedding, Jitka was silent as usual, but he had suddenly felt hot tears on his hand, that was holding her fingers tightly.

He did not see her cry even now. She came the following day, paler than usual. He did not ask her what she decided on. They helped her mother to pack, they carried away her suitcase and bundle and were ashamed to look at each other.

Now, six months later, his parents were listed for transport. George's mother was employed peeling potatoes in the "Hamburg" barracks. His father, a professor of philology (his favorite subject was Provençal, the language of the troubadours), walked daily up and down at the corner of the arcades of the "Magdeburg" barracks, a book held close to his eyes behind thick glasses. There, at the age of fifty-six, he studied his eighth language, Portuguese, while carrying out his present job of lavatory attendant. It was impossible to save them as essential workers, they were dispensable. George and Jitka volunteered to go with them.

The young couple were both working in the Terezín health service. George, a medical student, treated aged grannies and grandfathers at the outpatients' department in the "Engineers" barracks. He loved his work passionately. Jitka loved the babies she was looking after no less, though she did not show it so much. Yes, there was a nursery in the ghetto, primitive, poor, but it existed.

From the summer of 1942 onwards the Nazis had been building up their "Theresienbad" as one large Potemkin village. Here they brought delegations from neutral countries, the gentlemen of the Swiss Red Cross: "Here you are, gentlemen, see for yourselves how the German Reich treats its mortal enemies. They have their

self-government. There are hospitals, nurseries, homes for the aged. Their band plays for them in the square. They play football and attend theatre performances. They sing "The Kiss" and Verdi's Requiem. They receive parcels from abroad, here you are if you would care to have a look—Portuguese sardines. That is how prisoners live in National Socialist concentration camps and ghettos. Just you compare the facts you see here with the inventions of Jewish-Bolshevik propaganda, and when you return to your own country, tell all the world the truth, nothing but the truth, of what you have seen with your own eyes."

The reality displayed by the Nazis was not true. The thirty-five starving people, presented to the astonished gentlemen from Switzerland as the inhabitants of the "model ghetto" were not its real inhabitants. They were only temporary inhabitants. One for a week, one for a year, hardly anyone for a longer time. They had been brought here to Terezín from all parts of the "Great German Reich." Tens of thousands were taken further East. Tens of thousands died here.

Transport after transport was drawn up at the "Schleuse." Schleuse—that was what they called the assembly place of all those condemned to die. Schleuse means sluice-gate, the name is appropriate. The entire ghetto of Terezín was such a sluice. An unceasing stream of hundreds of thousands of lives flowed towards it, slowed down for a time, the water level rose, apparently calm, until it reached the very brink of the sluice-gate. Thirty-five thousand bare lives were its full measure. They had been driven here in thousands from Prague, Vítkovice, Hamburg and Vienna. The water level rose—the sluice overflowed. Men, women and children in their thousands and tens of thousands were sucked down over the monster-sluice in one mad eastward flowing stream of death.

And so they reported for transport. Good-bye, Terezín. We lived badly here, but still we lived!

One Sunday morning, at the beginning of September 1944, roll-call took longer, because of the reading and execution of the long-expected sentences for offences committed by prisoners in the last quarter. The political department of the SS in Auschwitz did not hurry with the sentences. That day, two Czechs for the first time awaited sentence, Karel Vlček and Kakalo.

Karel Vlček had met a fellow-countryman from Nymburk at his place of work, who was doing compulsory war-work there, and in this way Karel had been the first of us, to get in touch with home. He was much envied by everyone, until a letter was found on him at the entrance gate. Strangely enough he was not beaten up. He only had to sign a statement, and now, together with the others, he was awaiting sentence.

Kakalo had committed a different offence. He had been issued with clogs, whose rotten laces had disintegrated completely within a week. And so he went to the stores to get some new ones. There the "Kleiderkapo" broke his stick on him and so Kakalo found himself a piece of blue insulating wire at his place of work and used it instead. At the gate the other boys defended him, pointing out that it was forbidden to walk barefoot and that with unlaced boots he could not keep up with the others. The report was sent off, nevertheless, and so Kakalo was also waiting for sentence by the German "Reich."

Everybody heaved a sigh of relief when Karel Israel Vlček was sentenced to twenty five whip lashes for "forbidden contact with persons of Aryan origin." The sentence was carried out on the spot, and with so much consideration, that he was able to stuff a large beret into his trousers, given to him, to his great surprise, by the "Lagerältester" in person. Who would have thought that of him? Some other offenders were punished in the same way. The last one had even two caps stuffed in for safety. It was unnecessary, however. The sentence read: "Sentenced to death by hanging for sabotage and stealing material essential to the war effort."
Kakalo did not speak German and thus he understood the sentence of the German "Reich" only when they kicked the props from under his feet below the gallows.
Everybody knew right from the beginning that the gallows at the "Appelplatz" did not stand there for ornament. At Blechhammer hangings were carried out regularly, every month, during roll-call, and publicly. But why did they pick on Kakalo? His guilt, in comparison with that of Vlček's, was negligible, even from the Reich's point of view. For secret contacts with the Protectorate—25 lashes. For a metre of cast-off wire—death. Sentences beyond human comprehension.
These sentences had something in common with other displays of "Nazi humanitarianism" which the prisoners had come across again and again in their pilgrimage. At first, they had not taken much notice of them—they believed that it was not necessary to be afraid of them. There were so many new, terrible things, that the few things, similar even here to former times, escaped their attention. Only during further stages of their journey did they realize, that the Terezín ghetto had had so many of these "signs of humanitarianism," that to a certain extent, they had determined its form, at least on the surface. They did not, and could not, know, that these features were intentionally put into practice by Eichmann, on highest orders, and if some of them suspected it, they did not realize its full meaning. How much joy there was when, from the summer of 1942 onwards, they were again allowed to see their dearest, from whom they had been strictly separated, and when they were allowed to receive parcels. They could have no idea, that it was just in this way that the Terezín ghetto became an exceptionally effective tool for the "final solution of the Jewish problem."
In Birkenau, the family camp, in spite of its inexpressible horror, there also existed such oases of "SS humanitarianism," and because of their striking exceptionality it was impossible not to notice them. First of all the fact, that even here they stayed together! An unheard of privilege, envied by all neighbouring camps. At B—Camp, they were allowed to die together—husband, wife and children. They could not know, that it was only as a "Familienlager," that the camp fulfilled (after the experiences with the Warsaw Ghetto) its special mission in the complicated organization of genocide, thought out down to every detail. Starving mothers could not understand the hidden purpose behind "the children's soup" that their children received every day to supplement their rations. They only knew that the soup was thick, nourishing and deliciously smelled of goose dripping. They could not understand the hidden purpose of the "infant institute" in Block 29. They were happy, that there was a little milk for their poor babies. They clutched at these inconsequentialities like a drowning man at straws. "Why should they feed children, if..."

Until, at last, postcards sent anywhere, addressed to anybody (for which people were hanged in Terezín) from the working camp of Birkenau near Neu-Berun, which they signed under a false date, until this last "humanitarian act," enforced by the block leaders with blows of sticks on SS orders, opened the eyes of some of them.

Yes,—Vlček had done of his own free will (for which he received twenty-five lashes) only the same sort of thing that the others were kept and fed for in the family camp. He had confirmed for the German "Reich" by his signature, that he had passed through Birkenau alive and that he was now working together with free citizens of the "Reich," in short, he had confirmed the truth of the slogan "Arbeit macht frei." Even should they catch him at it again, he would not be hanged.

Kakalo had taken a bit of cast-off wire and therefore he had to die. That was the value of the life of a fifteen-year old, curly-haired boy. Why he, in particular? And why every one of the tens of thousands of children, old people, mothers with infants in arms, who for years now had been arriving at Birkenau? And why millions of those who were dying in the other camps, on battlefields, in the ruins of burning houses all over the world—since time immemorial?

Only long after the war, slowly, step by step, George realized that the Nazis' least understandable actions had been very well thought out indeed. And especially their acts of "humanitarianism." They were not dictated by chance. They were to hide the truth—to foster false hope—to make the victims themselves produce an alibi for their murderers, to make them, like herons, call others along, so that in the end, all should go to their death like sheep.



EVŽEN HILAR

ESCAPE FROM THE GHETTO



TEREZÍN. A bridge across the river Ohře, flour mills, a sharp bend to the right and another to the left. I go into third gear, slow down. Nobody stops me, nobody turns round after me. The town and the road have their normal rhythm of life, of daily rush. Only within me, there has always remained that special sensation. Always, when I pass through Terezín. The street of Aryans! This, the only road, cutting through the ghetto, was fenced off with tall white boards. Along this street walked—people. There was no yellow star on their clothes. Dogs and horses could run there freely. Cars drove there. Anyone belonging to this street was not only allowed to enter, but also to leave Terezín. For me it always meant the road to freedom. To walk along it, how often I wished for that! To stand at the gap in the fence and look into that small bit of free world—even that was forbidden.

More than twenty years have passed. I stop the car and get out into the street. Slowly, for I move on crutches. To get beyond that wooden fence, speaking symbolically, onto the road to freedom, has cost me dear. Escape, the privations of an outlaw, endless fighting in the mountains and at the front. Seriously wounded—invalided out. Tens and hundreds of thousands have stayed forever behind that fence. They could not, or did not, know how to find the way to freedom and perished after terrible suffering. The road had to be discovered within oneself. There existed only one freedom at that time: to carry arms. I was given my first tommy-gun with a cartridge-belt in the Slovak mountains by Ivan, the Soviet guerilla fighter. I wept for all those who remained defenceless.

I said that my way across the white fence was only symbolic. Escape! That is the thought of every prisoner. In the ghetto, too, it intoxicated the minds of the young. It was, however, necessary to choose. Outside the ghetto gates almost certain death at the hands of the Gestapo was waiting. Out of twenty, fifty, a hundred people that try, only one will survive, or maybe none. As to this calculation, the fascists left nobody in doubt. Above the red ghetto walls were still the shadows of the innocently hanged. In spite of that, my first thought on entering the ghetto was for escape. Carefully, I looked out of the crowd at the walls. As a beast, walking into a trap, subconsciously looks for a way of escape. My sister came there with me, too. My parents, however, were no longer in the Terezín trap. We did not meet at all. The Moloch of the Auschwitz camp had started to swallow up its first victims. Soon, my sister left with a transport. Sometimes I think about it. Would it have been in my power to save her? Would she have survived escape and the life of an outlaw? Days and nights without food and sleep? Everyone must decide for himself whether he wants to escape or not. The thought must occur to him by himself. She did not flee with me. A last wave from the cattle trucks overcrowded with prisoners. I, myself, was sure. I shall flee. Alone or with somebody. My choice fell on the two brothers Čaban, seventeen and twenty years old. Viky was my best friend and it was not difficult to persuade him. Not even I had sufficient courage to escape alone, though it was the most sensible thing to do. One thing was certain, we shall be pursued. The Gestapo will be at our former homes sooner than any of us could get there. We shall have to avoid all friends. The escape must be discovered as late as possible. I decided to climb down the fortress walls at night. Thus we shall gain time. Nobody must know of our intentions. There were many who would try to prevent us, for fear of

reprisals to the ghetto. We walked about as in a dream. The dark forms of the Central Bohemian Mountains attracted us. They were already in the free world, though they were in the Sudeten region.

How high are the ramparts? How can we get hold of a rope? There is only one possibility, to steal it somewhere. There was no abundance of ropes in the ghetto. The thoughts of its enslaved inhabitants, the "Jewish swine," were concentrated on a slice of bread with margarine made from coal, and the Polish transports. One day builders put up a high scaffolding at the "Hamburg" barracks and to prevent it from tumbling down, they tied it with a rope to the pillars on the second floor. Will it stay up or shall I fall down with it? At night, I untied the rope and hid it in the kitchen boiler, in the remains of the soup. Mind the ghetto guards. It was necessary to die the rope red with permanganate, so that it would not show up against the wall. A piece of pipe hammered into the top of the wall was ready for the iron hook of the rope. The enemy was ready, too. High walls, a trench with barbed wire obstacles below. Guards with rifles and dogs. The question arose again before us what to do afterwards. Each person we talk to will be in danger. We shall bring death to everybody who lets us stay over night, to him and to his whole family. We shall have to rely only on ourselves, on our youth and endurance. War is raging hundreds of kilometres towards the East. There is where we have to go. If we are to be killed, then at least fighting, or on the way to battle, but not as defenceless slaves.

It was getting on for autumn and nature offered us shelter and hospitality. Saturday night was the time. The moon was in its first quarter, one more day to go before escaping. Where shall we be tomorrow? Far away from Terezín? Locked up at the Small Fortress? Beaten up by the Gestapo? Or hanged? It was better not to think of that. We still had to take leave of the places which had hitherto given us some kind of protection. The barracks, the bunk on the third floor and some things reminding us of home. Friends pass by me, I see them for the last time. What will be their fate and what mine? They suspect nothing. They will know tomorrow. First as a "bonkes," or unconfirmed rumour. In two or three days there will be certainty confirmed by "Haussperre" and "Lichtsperre." Will they wish us success or curse us for harming the ghetto collective? I was convinced that my way was the right one. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. There is no escape from the gas chambers, except by way of the crematorium cart. There, lying on top, at the bottom, or in the middle, no one can decide his fate any longer.

No, I am not yet on that cart. My modest belongings, a suitcase with some rags, will stay here. Also the counterpane full of fat fleas in its folds. When they find out that I am no longer there, they will jump across, a sad inheritance, into my neighbour's blanket. I take only one thin blanket to wind around my boots. At night, every sound can be heard far off. In the evening, we go together to fetch our last "Knödel mit Tunke"—dumplings with gravy. Our thoughts keep away hunger. Zero hour is drawing near. Before it comes, we hide in the passage of the fortifications. There the rope and blankets lie prepared. A smell of damp mould, century-old, and of human remains prevails. We tremble with cold and excitement. I shall descend first, after me Viky and then Jirka. Jirka constantly worries about

his younger brother. When night grows dark, three figures creep out, the almost two-metre-tall Jirka, Viky only a little shorter, and I. We crawl almost soundlessly to the edge of the fort. Not far off, below us, a dog barks. We hear the metallic sounds of the guards changing. Return is still possible. There is danger in front of us. We feel it, but can no longer talk about it. I stop at the point where the wall begins to slant. Pressed close to the ground we grope for each other's hands, for a last handshake. I can feel how excited Viky is. If only Heindl would not think of taking his dog for his usual walk on the ramparts. That would end badly. In the distance the clock of the Litoměřice church is striking midnight.

Jirka catches hold of my legs and head first I descend the slanting wall. I grope for the metal pipe on top of the wall. For the time being everything is all right. I fix the iron hook and let the rope slide slowly down. Frogs are croaking down below. Is there no SS-man waiting for his victim? Is there no guard watching the ramparts just now? Jirka lets go of my legs, which are hanging over a thirteen-metre-deep abyss. The edge of the wall juts out. I hold myself with my left and my right hand is trying to catch hold of the rope below the projection. At last I succeed. Drenched with sweat I let myself down the rope, hand over hand. From time to time my wrapped boots knock against the wall. The rope seems endless. Will somebody shoot me down, this moment, like a sitting target? I have come to the end of the rope, but have not reached the ground. It lies in the darkness below me. How far? One metre, two or three? I do not know. I cannot go back. The rope, greasy from the soup, slides through my fingers. I let go and fall into some reeds. Then I listen, but nothing stirs. Against the sky I try to make out the figure of Viky, who is to come next. Several times I hear the fall of sand and pebbles. But I cannot see anybody. Was I trapped for minutes or a whole eternity at the bottom between the ramparts and the barbed-wire entanglement, with the rope on the wall, and my two companions at the top? Again a faint rustle of falling earth, panting, and at last Viky lets go of the rope, at a sign from me. Again there is tense waiting. We hear the steps of the gendarmerie guard. Suddenly some lights go up in the near-by military hospital. Is there an alert or not? Jirka is sure to hear it at the top, too. Now he will not come down. Silence again. A shower of pebbles and Jirka's mighty body slides down. He explains to me how Viky nearly fainted with excitement and how he could not make him go down for a long time. He must have overcome his fainting fit crawling through the trench, the two-metre-wide and one-metre-deep water surely refreshed him. There he also said good-bye to his wintercoat, which was to have helped him on the journey. We used it to wind round the wire so as not to make a noise clipping it. It is dark and we must get far away in the darkness. The rope, betraying the fugitives, is hanging down the wall. It was impossible to take it off. Will Jindra Roubíček, let into our secret the preceding evening, succeed in taking it away at dawn? I do not know what happened to the rope. Jindra Roubíček as well as his old mother perished in Auschwitz. I crawl on my back under the barbed wire, as I learned to do in the army. I pull Jirka and Viky through. Quickly we take off our boots and pass along the narrow path by the military hospital. A guard! A German soldier is quietly smoking a cigarette, somewhere far away at home in his thoughts. One cannot see from the light into darkness. Three shadows run past. We are outside.

A company of soldiers is passing along the nearby road. There are guards at the crossroads. Our bare feet do not feel the pricking stubbles. Our lives are at stake. Corn shocks rise threateningly in front of us, like enemies. We keep on running. Only now and then one calls quietly to the other so we shan't get lost. The excitement of the flight changes slowly but surely into fear. The original plan, to turn towards the Sudeten region, where they will least seek us, is off. We creep along the railway track. Viky's and Jirka's mother is in Prague. Will she be able to help them? They do not know. But family feeling drives them to her. Their father has already been executed. Will they be able to get in touch with their mother, if she is watched by the Gestapo after the first report of our flight?

Three fugitives are too many. Jirka and Viky think they will be safer if we divide up. The engineering troops of the Wehrmacht in their camouflage uniforms, camping along the river Ohře, have made us change our direction completely. Dawn reveals the fortress walls closely in front of us. During the night we have circled, or rather run, around the whole town and are now returning towards it. It is a horrible sight. They may be pursuing us already. The first country people are beginning to go to their fields. We have to get as far away from here as possible. By train. Quickly to the railway line, we all manage to scramble into a slow-moving goods train. At first, with heads pulled in, then bolder and bolder, our eyes watch the red walls of the ghetto and fortress receding in the distance. It was the first relief after the events of the night. The train runs slowly and stops everywhere. Kralupy. Will nobody see us from the bridge across the line? Roztoky near Prague. The well-known inn with the elephant that all children like to look at. Then more stops along the line near Prague. It is a queer feeling to approach home which is no longer home. How far away is Zbraslav, from which our family has recently been moved? How far away are they in Poland, if they are still alive? We pass through the Stromovka Park. The train slows down and we jump out between the rails. Another look at each other and the brothers almost flee out into the street. They are afraid of me. They look like Aryans, I look Jewish.

I only see their tall backs disappear in the distance. My steps, meanwhile, lead me into the blue. Prague is large and there is danger everywhere. By a damnable chance, not half an hour later, Viky and Jirka suddenly come walking towards me in one of the streets. They only notice me at the last moment. They hesitate, then turn on their heels and retrace their steps. I am not sorry. They are driven by fear. It was the last time I saw Jirka. He was caught and during cross examination jumped out of the window. Auschwitz and Mauthausen were still ahead for Viky.

I am standing in the street, looking into a shop window. All outlaws do that. People walk by me, children are running about. They have somewhere to go. Everyone has his food, his lodgings. Only an outlaw has neither. Just one single thought keeps him alive, he must not be caught. I walk about in overalls. I carry an old lavatory basin in my hands above my head. I am an artisan, going to work. It is not comfortable, but it is safer for somebody who has no identity card. I speak only to people who do not know me and do not know that I belong in a concentration camp. Then I make an attempt to ask somebody I know for help. It takes him

a long time to grasp that it is me. He has already struck me off the list of his acquaintances. He begins to tremble and behaves as if I had put a live coal in his hand. He looks round quickly, takes five hundred crowns out of his wallet. The Germans are bound to lose the war sooner or later, and he has still a million and a half left for the currency reform. He flees from me with a clear conscience. We do not know each other, we do not know each other, his back calls out. There are others. But I must sleep in the open. I hear that immediately after our flight the Gestapo made inquiries near our former home. Death follows close on my heels. Those who will hide me, will be shot. I read the names of executed persons on the posters. Are Viky and Jirka among them? I long to be out of town. The forests along the river Sázava seem safer to me. The left bank has been evacuated for the Wehrmacht, westwards up to the river Vltava. These soldiers in their training camp lack the sixth sense of our Germans of recognizing a Jew at a glance. Wearing an old gamekeeper's jacket I fetch my food from their field kitchen. Even an old piece of uniform impresses them. I find shelter in farms abandoned by evacuated farmers. At night I walk under the bridge on the traverse, twenty metres above the Sázava river bed, a sack of wheat on my back. Sometimes the SS come and arouse the countryside with the noise of their cars and motorcycles. No good can come of that. I always come out of my hiding-place under the straw and climb up a nearby oak tree around which I have strewn pepper and paprika in a wide circle. I bought it for my last money, so that the dogs might not track me down.

It is autumn and I shall not be able to live through the winter here. The only way is East. Along the river Sázava I see bungalows and hikers enjoying themselves. For them the weekends, for me danger. How am I to tell people apart? Will the gamekeeper give me a piece of bread and butter, or will he take me to the nearest gendarmerie post, a rifle in the small of my back? Will the farmer's wife— a German— give me a little milk? Is her son in prison, or is he fighting at the eastern front for the historical rights of the "Great German Reich"? Has he, having been wounded, come home on short leave, granted him together with the "Iron Cross?" All this, and many other things now decide my very existence. I must not look wild, unkempt, starving. I must look as if I had risen from a warm bed in the morning. My only weapon is a knife. It is little against a pistol or a tommy-gun. In the forest of the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands, children going to school run away from me. It is only in the gamekeeper's cottage beyond Svratka, that I can eat my fill and improve my appearance. They are good to me there, but it is impossible to stay. The forest, too, has its eyes and ears. They advise me to get to Kopanice. There it would be safer. Three hundred kilometres as the crow flies, how many is it walking along field boundaries, through forests, hiding all the time? I make a large detour round Brno. I steal climbing irons from a mechanic and carry them across my back. It is safer so. South Moravia. Mikulov. Here they are well used to refugees from Bohemia. A viniculturist invites me to his cellar in the hillside to drink to my successful escape. Another day or two, and the worst will be over. There is, however, another unpleasant surprise in store for me, during a misty morning, in the rain. I walk along some sort of embankment. Had I known that it was a railway line, I should have been more on my guard. Suddenly a bridge cuts across the embankment... Below, half hidden by a pillar, a soldier with a tommy-

gun. In front, the waters of the river Morava. He is just as surprised as I am. Before he has time to raise his gun, I jump him and throttle him with my bare hands. Fear gives me strength. I know how to fight, but he does not know how to shoot at a man. Later, at the front, I realized that everything must be learned, to do one's job, as well as to kill men. I am not sorry for him, even had there been time to think about it. He will sink more quickly with the tommy-gun. A month later I should not have left him the gun. I pull him down into the stream. His military cap has fallen off, and comes in handy for me. At least they will not start shooting directly they see me in the water. Strážnice must be near. It is difficult to swim. My shoes and clothes are soaked with water. Two hundred meters lower I crawl into the grass on the other bank. Slovakia. I spend four days in warm manure heaps, and at night, the road. It is November. At last, Kopanice, those lonely farmsteads above the town of Myjava. I am given white bread with dripping and plum brandy. Lots of that. How many have been helped thus? What may Viky and Jirka be doing? I wish they were with me. Then Bratislava. Three days later I have a new name, actually, I mean new documents. Ján Stuplava from Dolná Krupá. Religion: Roman Catholic. At Myjava Ján Stuplava joins the army as a volunteer for the eastern front. The doctor declares me fit for military service. A gypsy, he asks? Yes. The division destined to reinforce the retreating Germans does not leave. Ján Stupava hastens to the Orava region, to its highest peak Rozsutec. That is the place for him. Here already is Kukureli, the airman later to become a Slovak hero, who has escaped in irons from the Bratislava prison. Captain Ivan, the Soviet parachutist, and many more come there. The first Russian fraternal kiss on both cheeks.

We all have the same aim. Death to the fascists. Flight has ended and the time for battle has come. But that is another story.

OTTO KOHN

AN ESCAPE FROM THE TEREZÍN GHETTO

In compiling the articles for this volume, the editors learned that one of the few Jewish prisoners in Terezín who succeeded in escaping from the ghetto there is living in Moravia. Otto Kohn, Holešov 176, Kroměříž district, was asked to give the details of his escape and subsequent fate. He complied with the request and, although seriously ill, wrote his odyssey. He did this in such a simple, matter-of-fact style, which was all the more convincing and moving, that we are printing his contribution as he wrote it.

I received your request to tell some details of my successful escape from Terezín. Before doing so, I should like to ask you to kindly excuse my delay in answering, but trying the best I could I was not able to do so before this, because my state of health is truly catastrophic. I am 60 years old and because of active tuberculosis am bedridden and only from time to time feel well enough to concentrate my thoughts, not to speak of the fact that when I remember the time of imprisonment I always get considerably worse. And now for a brief review of the actual facts:

I was born November 7, 1903, in Holešov, where I also lived my whole life. I was first arrested by the Gestapo in 1941, because I was riding in an automobile, which was even then forbidden for Jews and some Holešov banner-waving Nazi informed on me. I was imprisoned in the Gestapo police station in Zlín, where I first experienced the Gestapo methods to the full extent. Then I was taken by train to various prisons in the Protectorate and in 1943 was deported to Terezín. The stay in the Terezín ghetto gave me the instinctive feeling that our fate would surely be much more cruel and two years of prison, the torment that went with it made me think that I, a solitary person, had nothing to lose and everything to gain if I should succeed in escaping, and thus save my bare life at least, although my health was even then considerably undermined. After three months in the ghetto, my plan had matured enough that my escape was only a question of time, for I had thought everything out, studied it, and with my three companions, whose names I no longer remember, had prepared everything properly. As far as I remember, two of the others were from Prague and one from Moravia and, as I learned after the war in Prague, they were caught right after the escape in Prague and, of course, executed. We made our escape on the first day of summer, June 21, 1943, at about midnight from the Podmokly barracks, where we quietly, one after the other, climbed over the wooden fence and got on the moat, only a few dozen yards away. None of the guards—the Ghettowache—or the Protectorate police noticed anything at all; we climbed over in an absolutely safe place and without any noise, even though we were all very frightened, for discovery meant certain death. After we had jumped the fence we were faced by the hardest task, and that was to get back to civilization with impunity.

Depressed in spirit, we constantly expected that someone would shout at us from the darkness: "Stop!" or "Stehenbleiben!" or "Halt!" Thank God, and I must repeat this today, we arrived, although full of fear, in Litoměřice, where no one noticed us and, since we had quite a lot of Protectorate currency, we rode together, first class express, to Prague. There we took hearty leave of one another, wished each other all the best and good luck, and saying, "Till we meet again, after the war at Flek's in Prague," we parted, each to find his next refuge individually. Alas, we never met again. Fate was too cruel; I was the only one of the four to get out whole. From Prague I went by foot to my home village of Holešov, where I had many friends that I knew would hide me, even at the risk of their own lives. During the day I hid in various dens and holes in the woods—simply, wherever I could, sleeping part of the time, part of the time looking for fruits and berries in the forest, to quiet my unbearable hunger. In the night I travelled on toward the south, to get home as soon as possible, because I often had mad ideas that from time to time drove me to the terrible notion of reporting at the authorities as a Jewish

runaway. It often happened that in the night I met a person who invited me to his cottage or dwelling and even gave me something to eat, and then these terrible ideas would come and I'd wonder whether he might betray me under the strain and, naturally, I would be driven to desperation.

And so I wandered on for fourteen days; two weeks of a battle of nerves and trying to keep control of myself was such a mental strain that my nervous system has been seriously disturbed ever since that time, and still today unbearable ideas run through my head. No one can imagine this battle who has not gone through it; after all, it was quite clear to me that our escape from Terezín had been noticed after a time and that all steps and measures had been taken by the Germans to catch us. Finally I reached the Hostýnské Mts, that is, an area that seemed safer to me, even if I did not know what to do or how—after all, I had been in prison since 1941. I had the good luck to find one of my good friends who hid me in a barn for a few nights, on the threshing floor, in the cellar, and wherever he could. He notified his neighbours in the mountains and so I went almost daily from one to another, changing my "home" every day or two. I got at least enough to eat that I wasn't hungry—I never had a very big appetite. Sometimes I helped to chop wood, herd sheep or clean out the barn, always with the idea that the sword of Damocles was hanging over my head and could strike me at any time. I was simply an exile without a home and without any rights, relying on the mercies of my neighbours and friends who did not let me down—on the contrary, at the risk of their own lives and the lives of their families they saved me, a simple person, a plain worker from my very youth. In mental and physical suffering I lived to see the freedom I had so longed for, even though it was with impaired health. I lived through a time of greatest degradation and infamy of the Jewish people, whom I love and to whom I proudly belong.

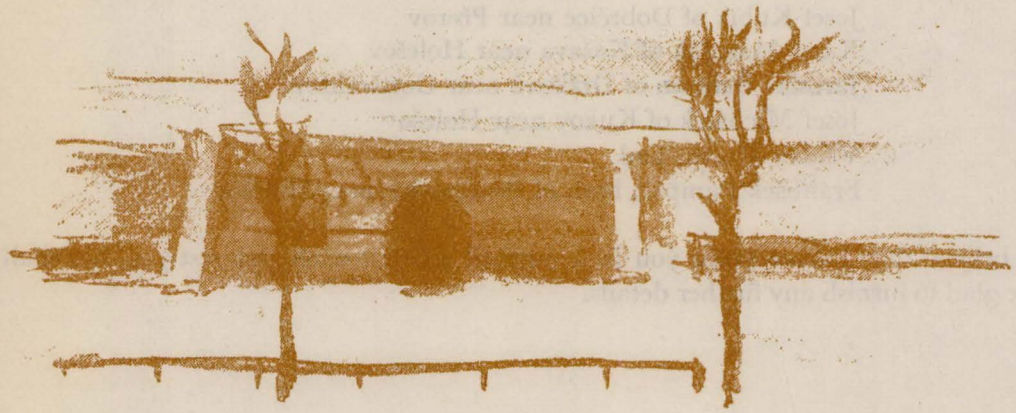
I would not have completed my story if I had left out the names of all those most loyal and courageous people, as well as most self-sacrificing, who actually risked their lives to offer me what was most necessary to save my life. And so I should like to ask you, if the book about Terezín is published with my story in it, not to forget to give the names of those who helped to save the life of the "stinking Jew" who had no rights or claims. They are:

Františka Imrušková of Vizovice
František Kubíček of Valašské Klobouky
Josef Kubík of Dobrčice near Přerov
Karel Marušák of Kašava near Holešov
Jaroslav Šarman of Držková near Gottwaldov
Josef Michálek of Kukov near Holešov
Václav Marek, and
František Pumprla both of Prusinovice near Holešov

I believe that I have given you in a nutshell all that could interest you, but shall be glad to furnish any further details.

Dr. RUDOLF ILTIS

THE UNSUNG HEROES



WE WERE awakened in the night by a messenger from the "Labour Office of the Terezín Self-Government." We were to begin demolition at eight a. m. of house number such and such. We started work. A one-storey house in the rear was being torn down. The courtyard was fenced on one side and in front of this fence, solidly built of boards set close together, a "protectorate" gendarme was on guard. At first he did not notice us. But when some of us climbed on the roof and began to take off the tiles that we handed along in a long chain to a corner of the courtyard, he said in a kindly tone, "Fellows, you have to use your head at that work, so you won't get so tired; after all, they give you hardly anything to eat." Then he gave some hints and advice to those who were working on the roof. And to those of us in the chain he said, "Just work fast enough so you won't get cold and no more." It was a cold February day and a biting wind was blowing. "Keep your chin up! It can't last long!" He walked here and there along the fence and dropped a word every once in a while in a casual way, only keeping an eye out whether someone was coming to inspect the work.

And so we learned what London and Moscow had broadcast in the night and early morning and our gendarme merely added, "Now, see, fellows, this can't last long. Hold out! And now pay attention, in a little while my replacement will come and watch out for him. Work hard and don't play around!"

Yes, there were good gendarmes and there were worse, and there were those who tried to get even with the SS-men from the Terezín command.

And among the good ones—nay, among the best—was the sergeant of the guard, Karel Salaba. What he did for the inmates of the Terezín ghetto at the risk of his own life can be seen from the few lines of the letters we quote:

FROM HANUŠ DUB TO SERGEANT OF THE GUARD KAREL SALABA

Ústí nad Labem, August 18, 1945

Dear friend,

I learned with great joy from my friend that you are alive and well, and even at work in Prague.

I confess that it makes me feel bad to revive the memories of the moments spent in your presence in Terezín from December 1941 until the summer of 1943. I see you constantly before my eyes as a staunch man, determined for life or death, and as time passes I realize more clearly the great aid you gave all of us and am more aware of what danger you had to go through at every step. Karel, I confess that I have recalled your words of comfort and strength very often. Believe me, they were an encouragement to go on living in the most cruel moments. I can still hear your words, "Hold out, fellows, the hour of revenge is near!"

And when you smuggled in that small radio that we listened to in a secret nook and watched the advance of the heroic armies!

Those were, and still are, unforgettable moments. You were the one to hold fast to the idea, "we will win."

And today, when I make this small confession, I cannot hide the fact that at one time I, together with a small circle of friends, was very much afraid for you—and do you know when? I believe it was January 18, 1942, at the mass execution of our comrades. The SS-men got drunk and it was a fine sight. All the while you—hidden behind the knoll on the bastions—took the liberty of photographing this disastrous affair while the SS-men were doing their terrible work. Karel, don't you think you were stepping on your own corpse a hundred times over? And then your other photographs of mass graves by the crematorium and the whole life in Terezín. Now, please tell me, did you ever think of your own life and of that of your family? I'll answer this myself and I think I know you—you were willing to heroically sacrifice your own life.

When I remember that every day the gendarmes were reminded that the SS courts had jurisdiction over them and that merely having a camera in Terezín, without taking any pictures—that the SS also gave great attention to—meant a sentence of death—well, I think that was really a little too much for you to do.

The smaller matters I can't remember very well, but there surely were dozens of them every day. And in all this Nazi fury, you initiated the idea of putting all reliable former soldiers in the labour groups, organized from the squards to battalions in case of need. At that time you hinted, in a small group, in answer to a question about arms, "They are here and we shall seize them." Karel, today all the Nazi fury and the suffering are past. Perhaps with the passing of time everything will be seen differently and many scars in life will be forgotten. But acts such as yours should never be forgotten and I believe that they will not be forgotten!

Karel, I should like to have a chat with you this way, but with the tangle of ideas it is not very possible. I do not believe that anyone could in any way describe all the sufferings and labours, for even a large book would not be enough.

But you surely understand what I want to say in these few lines as man to man, and first of all I sincerely thank you for all and for everything.

I am ending this with a wish for lots of luck in your future life. And I add greetings from my parents, who returned, although two brothers, tortured to death, did not.

Sincere greetings and I am looking forward to a letter from you and especially to our next meeting.

Yours,
Hanuš Dub, Ústí nad Labem
Dr. Beneš Square

Prague, July 28, 1954

Dear Sergeant Salaba,

Your kind letter was not only a pleasant surprise, but the fact that you found out so quickly about my return home, and what my present address is, astounded me. Thank you also for returning the package I once entrusted to you in the ghetto. It is almost the only thing remaining of former splendor.

It was only after I was arrested by the Gestapo in Terezín that I recognized how heroically you behaved when you were arrested there—today I know what that meant then.

When I realize how you smuggled to me the urn with the ashes of my dear mother from the crematorium, how patiently you sought medicine for me, how you carried packages and to my poor brother in the bunker—why weren't you there instead of that disgusting Hašek? If you had, he would surely be alive today.

When I remember how you let me listen to London in your casino as I scrubbed the floors, although Hašek and Janeček were quite close—and what about the photos you took and that went to Switzerland? I hope some were left that I could have in remembrance.

During my interrogation at Gestapo headquarters it came to my mind that your actions against regulations made by our hangmen could have cost you 1500 years of concentration camp. And you would not have had it there the way we did with Karel Salaba in Terezín. I shall never forget how you officially ordered me to brew tea in the guardhouse for the poor old people, your own tea—that was in the "šlojska" in the Podmokly barracks, and you didn't forget to tell me, "If someone should come, say you are making it for me"!

You were a splendid fellow and still are.

I would like so much to talk to you personally and I hope you wil look me up in Prague so that I could thank you in person for all you have done for me. The things you did for so many suffering people—there aren't words to thank you for this. The Lord God Himself must repay you.

I look forward to seeing you soon and, with greetings to you and your wife, I remain

Yours,
Greta Kubátová
Hálkova 11, Praha II

FROM ANTONÍN JANOTA, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, TO KAREL SALABA

Prague, May 18, 1945

Sergeant Karel Salaba
Nemanice, by České Budějovice

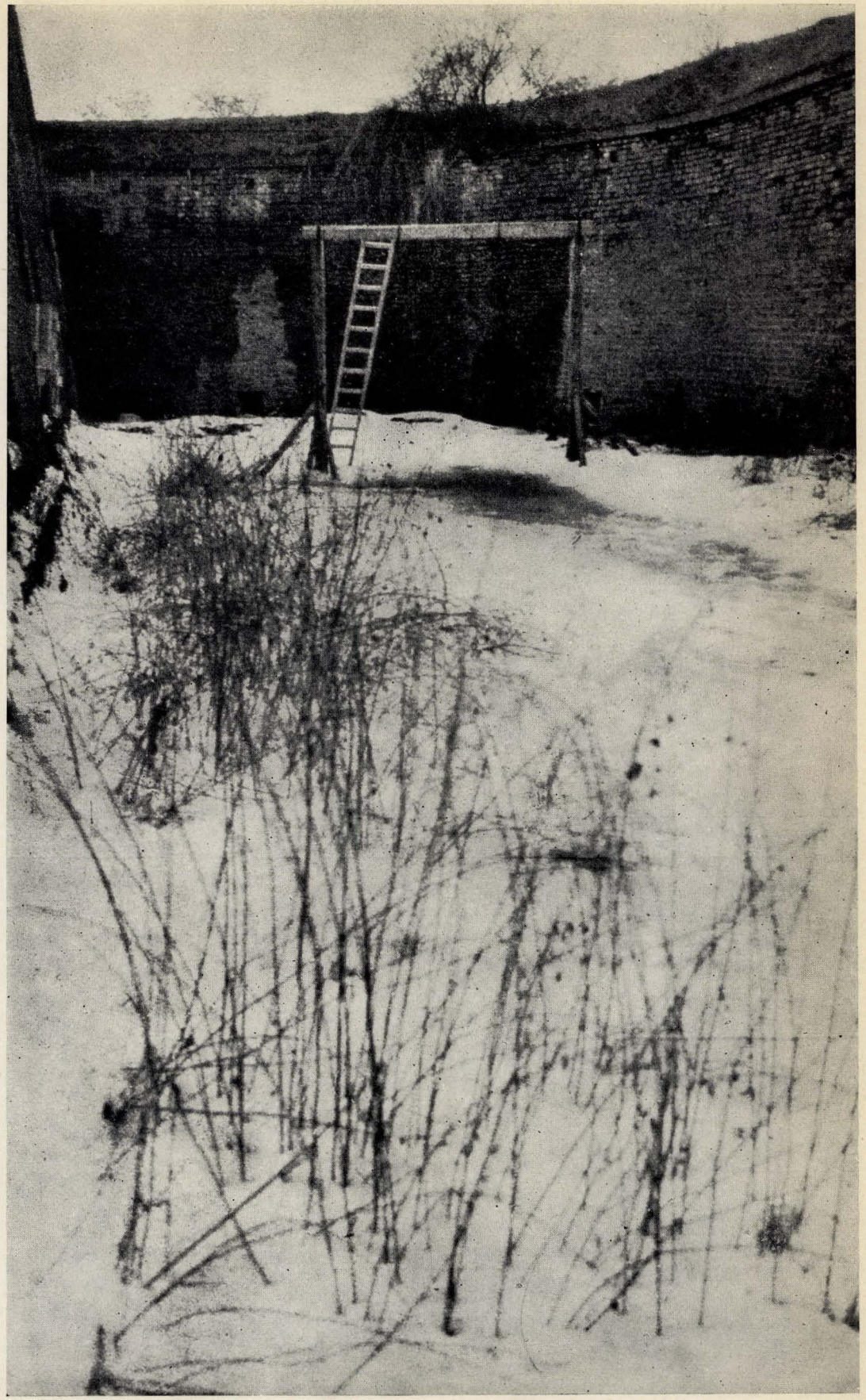
Dear Sergeant Salaba,

One of the memories of good people I address to you in the days of our liberation, with sincere greetings from me and my wife.
We survived it all, even the last critical moments and we gratefully remember all those who helped us and our friends. You were a self-sacrificing and able liaison with our Terezín friends and for a long period, until you were recalled, you took care of our good friend Dr. Karl Schönbaum. We do not know where he was taken by transport in 1944, but we had sad news of his son about February of last year.
We have sincere recollections of all your dauntless devotion in delivering information to our nephews Jirka and Milan, and Honza Kraus, and of your service, spreading the ghetto reports from London and Moscow broadcasts. I did not even want to think before this about the way you smuggled a radio into Terezín, for this was very brazen on your part and the Nazis would never have forgiven you. Now please accept our sincere thanks for this also.
We wish you all the best in your future life and hope that the new life will reward you for your humanity, as well as your courage and firmness of character. And when you come to Prague don't forget to pay us a visit.

Yours,
Antonín Janota
Marie Janotová
Italská 27, Praha XII

AND KAREL SALABA TELLS HIS OWN STORY:

"In the early part of November 1941 I was transferred from Nemanice, near České Budějovice, and put in a special group of gendarmes that were to have guard duty in the Terezín ghetto. We arrived in Terezín shortly before the first transport of Jewish prisoners, the one that was called Transport AK 1, which meant Aufbaukommando 1. It was quite a while before we and the prisoners learned to know one another, before they could tell which of us to trust and we, who maintained contact with them when not on duty, despite the strict prohibition, could know which of them we could rely on.
"I took a camera to the ghetto and, although the mere possession meant punishment by death, I did not follow regulations to give it up. I began to take photographs. I usually hid it in my straw pallet and photographed what I thought was interesting, with the intention of showing the world what was actually going on in Terezín. I photographed the executions in January 1942."





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62—67 Secret photos from the Ghetto, taken illegally by the Ghetto policeman Karel Salaba. The gallows and burials in the Ghetto

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68 The sheep from Lidice



In answer to the question how this could have been done, Karel Salaba replied, "The executions occurred behind the Ústí barracks. A chain of gendarmes were placed on the bastions at a certain distance. I had the opportunity to tear up some grass, placing a brick there to hide my camera, and I pressed the trigger with my foot. The photographs I am putting at your disposal were taken before the execution. I did a lot of photographing. I took the pictures with me to Prague and gave them to friends who lived in Rybná Street and later in Petrská; they passed them on. They were engaged in underground activity and so the photos got abroad and were published in a Swiss paper. This was a big affair and I was dragged into it."

And how did you get out of it?

"First, I should tell you something else. When we got to know some of the prisoners a little better and knew whom to rely on, I began to do little favours for them. One day, Frantík came to me, I think he was named Kraus, and said: 'Look, Karel, you have to do something for us. I heard you are on guard duty at the gates of the Hamburg barracks. There several thousand women are living, for weeks and weeks wives are separated from husbands, mothers from sons, let them come to see them today.' I hesitated for a long time. This was forbidden under pain of severe punishment, it was as risky for me as for prisoners. I wanted to refuse, but Frantík insisted. Finally I gave permission for them to come, but in small groups, and they were to go as soon as it began to get dark.

'But, Frantík, choose only people you can rely on one hundred percent.'

"In the afternoon I went on duty. In a little while nearly a thousand men had gathered in front of the Hamburg barracks! I let them in. There surely wasn't a room in the place without a man! What if the SS came to check?

"And they came. The worst cur in the SS, camp inspector Bergl came right up to the gates. What now? Maybe the best would be to take out my pistol and make an end of myself. I look into the courtyard of the barracks. An old granny is shuffling through the yard. I roar at her, "Sie verfluchte Saujüdin, warum sind Sie nicht in der Ubikation!"[1]

"Then I reported to Bergl. He smiled at me, patted me on the shoulder, 'So ist's recht, so muss der Dienst bei den Saujuden gemacht werden,'[2] and went on.

"I can swear that was the first and last time that I yelled at one of the prisoners. I was really sorry for the old woman, but this was the only way out and it helped me even later. Toward evening we let the men visitors out of the barracks—they were there about two hours—in groups, and at the gate each group reported to me as if they had been a labour column, and I signed some sort of a paper for them."

And the affair we were speaking of?

"One day the Gestapo came to the ghetto about the photographs that had appeared in the press abroad. They knew the prisoners could not have made the photographs, they excluded the SS, too, because they did not believe that any SS-man would have violated the ban on possession of a camera. Only the gendarmes remained. And the interrogation started. And since some of us had helped the

1. "You damned Jew-sow, why aren't you in your room?"

2. "That's right, that's the way to work with the Jew-sows."

prisoners, something about the forbidden contact between gendarmes and prisoners came out. One of the prisoners confessed that he had given one of us a letter to deliver to the addressee outside the ghetto. At the confrontation he confessed that it might have been me and that he had given me the letter in front of the barracks of the gendarmerie when I, together with a group of gendarmes, climbed into the car. At that time a certain number of us had leave. I managed to prove that it could not have been to me that the prisoner gave the letter, because the whole time our group was getting in the truck, first lieutenant Janetschek was standing there. He tried to be even more severe with Jews than the SS were and he saw that I got in with my suitcase and the case in which I had my violin. This he confirmed at my interrogation and also Bergl, who was questioned about me, affirmed that I was a gendarme who performed his duty in an exemplary way. They could not prove anything, but the suspicion that after all I might have had something to do with the photographs still stuck to me. Thirteen gendarmes were shot in the Little Fortress for forbidden contact with Jews and I was transferred back to Nemanice.

"But this did not end the business.

"The Gestapo called me in several times and once my interrogation lasted in one stretch almost three days and three nights. I stuck to it that I had nothing to do with the photographs. After a time a Czech officer in the gendarmerie, a liaison between the Protectorate gendarmerie and the Gestapo, warned me that again something was starting against me. So I 'bought' some infectious jaundice and lay several weeks in the hospital. And when I was released only a few days were left before liberation."

CHAPTER IX

PLANS THAT WERE NOT CARRIED OUT

BUILDING GAS CHAMBERS IN TEREZÍN

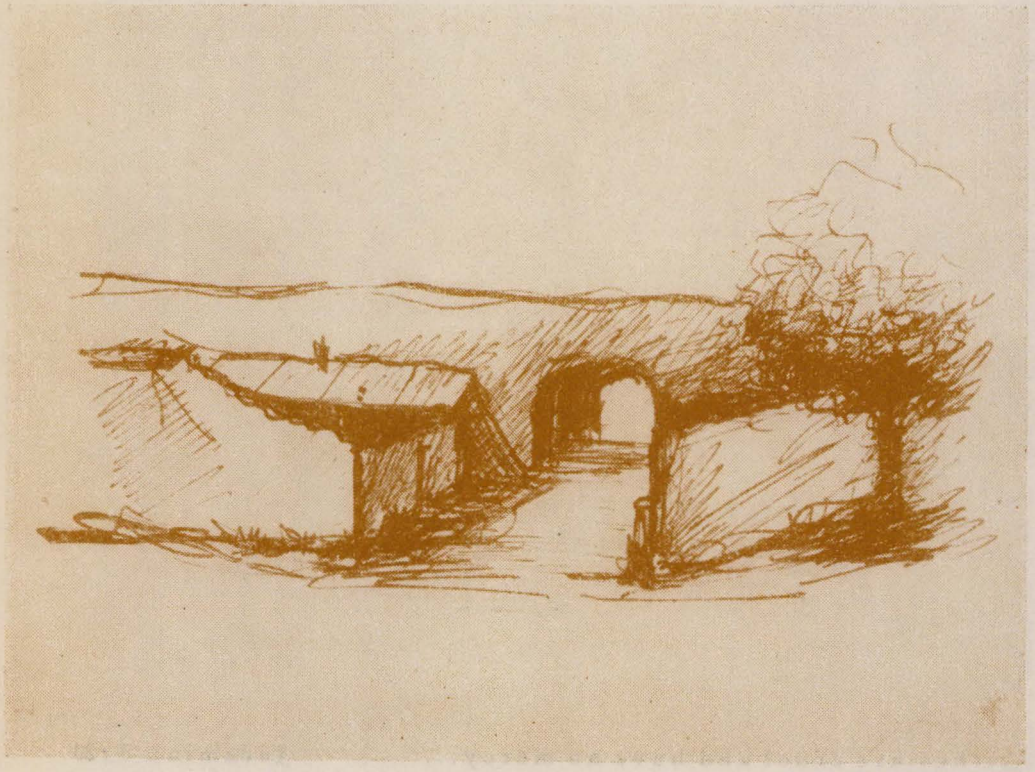
František Fuchs

THE DUCK POND / Arnošt Weiss

...they are cruel and have no mercy... Jeremiah 6 : 23

FRANTIŠEK FUCHS

BUILDING GAS CHAMBERS IN TEREZÍN



WHEN the Nazis announced that a camp for Jews would be set up on the territory of the Protectorate, the Jewish Religious Community in Prague received the news with a certain feeling of relief. After the transports that had been sent to the East, this made for a relative optimism, for the head of the Jewish Religious Community Dr. František Weidmann and his colleagues felt that it was essential for the protection of Jews in our country that they should not leave the territory of Bohemia and Moravia, but should remain in contact with the rest of the population. This also was the basic directive that Dr. Weidmann and Jacob Edelstein gave the commission for questions connected with setting up ghetto, for material preparation, organization and setting up a staff.

The Nazis considered a number of places in Bohemia and Moravia for location of the camp. At first they had in mind three chief places: Terezín, Josefov, and Tábor (the old historical part). Josefov was dropped and the Jewish Religious Community had a number of objections of a technical character against Tábor. The real internal reasons were mainly two: health (the sewage and water system) and political. The latter was based on the fact that taking historical Tábor would be a provocation against the Czech nation, and ignorance or duplicity on the part of the Nazis could cause misunderstanding and a failure to realize that the idea did not originate with the Jews. Finally the choice fell on Terezín, despite all endeavours of the Jewish Religious Community to convince the Nazis they should select another place that could not be cut off from the outer world so easily.

The chairman of the commission Otto Zucker, an oustanding organizer and experienced politician, considered, as did Weidmann and Edelstein, that a guarantee of a relatively favourable development lay in a good, solid, internal organization, and continual contact between the ghetto and the outer world through the Jewish Religious Community in Prague.

For this reason a department was set up at the Community Centre, which was to be not only a contact point, but also intermediary for legal and underground supplies. Whereas the other departments were called according to their activity, for example, economic, social, etc., this department was briefly designated as Department G. Mr. Zucker, who headed both the commission and Department G, worked with feverish diligence to assure the basic conditions for overcoming the first difficulties and build as good a basis as possible for life in the ghetto. He was thorough, harsh—even ruthless—but he deserves credit for the energy and drive with which he assured at least a minimum standard for the Terezín inmates. Although he did not believe the Nazis at all, and expected only the worst from them, still he could do more than was found possible afterwards.

The Nazis were interested in cutting the ghetto completely off from the world. Department G was to be merely formal in character, with only a limited activity permitted. This I realized after Mr. Zucker was sent to Terezín and I took over from him. But we did not want to content ourselves with this restriction. Therefore we built up Department G as an elite organization with people who were full of initiative and had a firm backbone. Examples were M. Baier, Dr. Otto Guth and Karel Popper.

Dr. Rudolf Bergmann, Dr. Erich Munk and Robert Schliesser sent us word from Terezín about what they needed and we helped as best we could to supply them. Often Dr. Weidmann's wise moves assisted in this. For instance, he managed to fix it that we should get straw for straw pallets in Terezín. One day he triumphantly handed us a voucher with the stamp of the Sicherheitsdienst, stating that we could buy this straw directly in the countryside. We flooded Terezín with straw, with the substantial aid of the Czech farmers. Or course we didn't send just straw.

The cars with straw were a good way to smuggle in important necessities, especially medicine. I remember how our doctors and co-workers bought medicine all over the Protectorate (e. g., a lot of Cibazol) and what trouble we had in financing the purchases. We succeeded in an excellent business in Ostrava, for example. When some Ostrava Jews were being transported, we requisitioned a relatively well equipped pharmacy of the Jewish hospital. To make sure, we sent the energetic physician Dr. B. Berl to carry it out. What was our surprise when Berl told us he had found a large bottle of opium hidden there. We knew that this was not only of great financial value, but was also quite a ticklish matter from the point of view of the Germans. But, according to reports, opium was needed in Terezín to treat the dysentery that was raging there and taking the lives of the inmates. The opium was smuggled in with thoroughness and caution and we were happy to hear from Munk that everything was in order.
It is hard to calculate all we managed to smuggle in; I remember that we even thought of culture—we sent 26 crates of Czech books to Terezín in the straw. They had been collected from reliable co-workers. The organization of loading and unloading went smoothly and, despite all the risk, turned out well.

We should bear in mind the fact that if this had been found out, all those who took part could have lost not only their own lives, but also those of their families. Therefore a prerequisite for success of all the actions was not only initiative, determination, and courage, but primarily thinking everything through and the certainty that all co-workers were completely reliable and devoted. I'm glad to say that these were the characteristics of the vast majority of our co-workers in Prague and Terezín.
This was important for us technicians, because good political and factual understanding and bold decisions meant better living conditions for the interned Jews. Therefore, the broad conceptions of Zucker were appropriate for solving the question of sanitary facilities (water supply and sewage), and the initiative and diligence of the technicians in assuring better dwellings and social conditions were of good purpose. So it was in keeping that, despite all the personal danger, a good deal of material was ordered for construction for the Nazis and this disappeared into the recesses of the ghetto and was the basis for improving the dwellings, building rooms in attics, and for social facilities. Other contraband material was used to make chimneys, stoves, household utensils, children's carriages, beds, etc.
In former times we often thought that technicians did not think enough in political terms and that in solving technical questions they forgot what their work was to serve from the social standpoint. In Terezín this opinion of technicians was found to be quite unjust.

The overwhelming majority of both the leading and the rank-and-file technicians were of an extraordinarily high level, were conscious of what technique should serve and how it could be misused by the Nazis. Therefore, besides the work done on an extremely high technical level, the technicians in Terezín deliberately turned out bad products, made waste of valuable material, and so on. A great deal could be written about such cases in various fields.

Many technicians were engaged in the resistance movement. In creating an organization for a possible armed uprising, every house block (that was to form a fighting unit) had a technician appointed as assistant to the head of the block.

A well-known case is that of resistance on the part of technicians to the building of gas chambers. At the beginning of 1945, the camp command gave orders to make special closed storerooms in the dungeons and to build a duck pond at Ravelin. The way these were ordered to be built and the rumours that had penetrated about the gassing of Jews in the East aroused the mistrust of the building technicians. Upon investigating the so-called ventilation system that was to be installed, the workers who had been entrusted with the job came to the conclusion that these were ducts for leading gas into the gas chambers.

One of these technicians, engineer Erich Kohn, went to Judenältester Dr. B. Murmelstein, told him about it and declared that Jews would work no longer on installations that were to serve to gas other Jews or anyone else, and that they would rather be shot before the eyes of the whole world than to continue in this work.

After several discussions and a long and exciting debate through the night, Dr. Murmelstein went to the head of the ghetto Rahm and told him of this stand. Rahm had Kohn called to the Ravelin fortification and asked him if he thought it was a question of gas chambers. Kohn said that was what he thought. Rahm drew his revolver, hit Kohn and kicked him before the eyes of the other Jews. Later the construction of gas chambers was stopped. According to subsequent information this occurred on the basis of a report Rahm sent to Berlin and on the orders that were then sent from there.

ARNOŠT WEISS

THE DUCK POND




37

69 Today children play in the watchtower

70, 71, 72 Here is where the Nazis wanted to drown the inmates just before the war's end



71





BEHIND the Magdeburg barracks to the southeast there was a part of the fortification ring marked Ravelin XV. In between were both fortification ramparts with the moats that completely surrounded Terezín. In the rampart moat another ditch or sluice, about a meter wide, was placed; it was fed by the sluice works of the River Eger that flows past Terezín, very near Ravelin XV. The old builders of the fortifications made use of this fact and fixed it so that the sluices could be opened to let water from the Eger into the rampart moats; if the fortress had to be defended, this would furnish supplementary defense.

That was Anno Maria Theresa.

Anno Hitler the SS-command modified the tactics.

I was given the task in February 1945 to make a duck pond as part of establishing a duck farm in Ravelin XV. For this purpose, the two ramparts running parallel with the fortress ramparts were to be shut off by building a wall between them. On the south side of the rampart moat, between the walls a gap in the wall was to be enlarged. The approach to the rampart moat was to remain open, in the form of a sloping ramp.

The work was carried out under my supervision, with a large use of manpower and was often checked on by the Germans. We understood what this structure was to be for, and at one of the check-ups our fears were completely confirmed by the following conversation between Rahm and Heindl, whom I had to follow at a distance of ten steps, after making a report on progress.

The two of them climbed up on the earthworks by the sloping ramp that constituted an entrance to the duck pond and from which one could see the whole construction up to the sluices, and Rahm explained to Heindl: "From here you can get a full sweep of the approach with a single aggregate." I thought, naturally, that he meant machine guns, but from the testimony of the commander of the Small Fortress Jöckl before the court, it seems that flame throwers were to be used.

It was therefore clear that the Jews were to be led into a trap on some pretext (perhaps another count-out), and no escape would be possible. One can imagine how all of them would have pushed to the exit when the sluices were opened, and in a short while a wall of corpses would have completely shut off the "duck pond," so that no one could have come out alive.

Realizing what the vile plan was, I had the wall foundations laid so shallow that they could not withstand any water pressure. Besides this, I left in the middle of the large wall a big opening, explaining to the people who checked on our work that this was essential as an opening to be used during construction, and that it would be closed when the whole structure was finished.

CHAPTER X

TEREZÍN CHILDREN-TODAY

Dr. RUDOLF ILTIS



And the effect of righteousness will be peace,

and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust for ever.

Isaiah 32 : 17

PETER KIEN, one of the "Terezín Painters" managed with a few strokes to bring to paper the unbelievable tragedy covered by the concept of "child prisoner." From behind the high barbed-wire crowned fortification wall a small Jewish boy longingly and sadly watches a kite that another child before the wall lets fly high. The child behind the wall has no kite, no liberty. He is in jail, a prisoner. The kite dancing high up in a gentle breeze is the symbol of his lost freedom for the little Jewish boy. A child prisoner, an innocent child, waiting here, as so many hundreds and thousands of others have, in the death cell for his execution. The name of the cell is Terezín.

Fifteen thousand children passed through this cell. For the main part unsuspectingly, they passed away the time and their waiting for death with painting and drawing, writing poems and prose. About one hundred of them have survived the greatest mass murder committed on children known in human history.

In the year 1963 a young Italian film director and film theoretician by the name of Carlo di Carlo began to interest himself in the fate of the few survivors. It might sound surprising that it was an Italian film artist, for among the nationals of seventeen states that the Nazis deported to the ghetto of Terezín there were no Italians. Nevertheless there exists great interest throughout Italy for the "Bambini di Terezín." It was caused by an exhibition of child drawings from the ghetto of Terezín, that has already been on show for two years in Italy, and was arranged by the State Jewish Museum in Prague, as well as through a collection of children's poems and drawings published in Italy under the title "*Children at the Transit Station to Death—Terezín 1941—1945.*" A special committee has made it its duty to keep alive the memory of the "Terezín children" in Italy and to pass on their legacy as a warning to the younger generation.

Carlo di Carlo followed the tracks of the surviving children from the death cell of the Terezín ghetto. How did they come back to life from the "transit station to death?" Was the period of their imprisonment of decisive influence for their future life? How do they live and how does the ghetto town of Terezín live today? The answers to these questions were to give him the possibility for flash backs into the ghetto epoch and for presenting some of these children—themselves fathers and mothers today—their present activities, thoughts and life. He chose five men and three women for his purpose. On these quasi "samples" he furthermore wants to demonstrate how much the world probably lost in talent, creative power and efficiency in the most perfect genocide of fifteen thousand Jewish children.

Let us give the floor to one of the children, today thirty-nine-year-old writer Arnošt Lustig of Prague:

"Whenever I turn back the pages of the story of my life to draw knowledge from the memory of separate days, weeks and years, there appears before my inner eye the picture of a generation, that of my generation. I lived through the Second World War as Jew and as one of the lowest of the pariahs. For me the war meant condensed hopelessness and humiliation. To this realization a hope was added during the war: to destroy mercilessly this world of humiliation and to build a world of peace on its ruins, where man would be able to eat when he was hungry and to drink when he was thirsty, where he would be able to work according to his strength and where he would keep his human dignity that distinguishes him from animals. A new war

would bury these hopes, for that would no longer be a war like that of the Philistines, of David and Goliath, not even a war of bombing like that of the years 1939—1945. It would mean a war of nuclear destruction, delaying the development of our earth not for ten thousand, but for a million years. Again, that remarkable creature would have to develop from primeval and pre-historical animals, though now standing on the threshold of unheard-of possibilities, at the door of all man's greatest hopes . . .

"Many years after the end of the war, when my son was born, I closed my eyes in horror at the thought that one day he might experience what happened to the Jewish children in the birch forest near Auschwitz, where the German fascists smashed the heads of new-born babes against tree-trunks or walls, where they tore them in two by their tiny legs, or threw them—still living—into the flames . . .

"That experience was and still is of a most intimate nature: never again will anybody succeed in making sheep of us, to be driven to slaughter unresistingly. We have become fighters for our hopes, we hate war, as we hate plague, death or humiliation."

These are also the feelings of the other "Terezín" children that Carlo di Carlo chose for his book:

René Tressler, electrotechnique—Jiří Pavel, officer in the Czechoslovak army—Vera Kosinová, editor—Dagmar Berzetti-Hilarová, lyrik poet—Helga Weissová-Hošková, painter—Jiří Justic, driver—and Alexander Singer, opera-singer.

It is certain that the Italian film worker Carlo di Carlo might have chosen other examples to answer the question of "What has become of the children that survived Terezín." Then also he would have succeeded in bringing evidence that the world has lost immeasurable values of talent, efficiency, even genius, by permitting genocide without interfering. Let us only mention some of the children, who succeeded by the skin of their teeth in getting out of the death trap of Terezín:

Jehuda Bacon is today professor at the Academy of Arts in Jerusalem. Dr. George Diamant is lecturer at the psychiatric university clinic in Prague, Paul Fuchs is a construction engineer, Eva Landová-Merová is a teacher at the Academy of Languages in Leningrad, Alena Synková-Munková is dramaturgist of the state studios for trick films in Prague, neurologist Dr. Karel Weiss is physician at the regional hospital in Kladno near Prague. The world-famous harpsichordist and pianist Zuzana Růžičková-Kalabisová is professor at the State Academy of Music in Prague.

The Italian film worker Carlo di Carlo is conscientiously preparing himself for his work, he has studied literature concerning Terezín, read the translation of Arnošt Lustig's Terezín short stories and Dagmar Hilarová's poems, he attended the exhibitions of drawings and paintings by Helga Weissová-Hošková and most of all: he went to Terezín.

There he let the milieu work on him: in the town, living today again the every-day life of a country town, in the "Small Fortress," the former "police prison of Terezín." There he saw a scene that made a deep impression on him: "That's how I shall let my film end," he said. On the watch tower of the large court yard, where the SS-guards with machine-guns used to control the entire space and all the actions of the prisoners, to whom they could mete out death and destruction according to their whims—children were playing. This is how the film "The Children of Terezín" will end and with it that chapter so shameful in the history of humanity entitled:

Child Prisoners.

CHAPTER XI

TEREZÍN – ITS INFLUENCE ON CZECHOSLOVAK LITERATURE, MUSIC, PLASTIC ARTS AND FILM

Dr. RUDOLF ILTIS

Tell your children of it,
and let your children tell their children,
and their children another generation. Joel 1:3

Das ist der Weg nach Theresienstadt,
Den Tausende mühsam beschritten,
Und jeder von all den Tausenden hat
Das gleiche Unrecht erlitten.



IN THESE simple verses, written under the impression of experiences in the ghetto of Terezín, Ilsa Webrová, as so often in her Ghetto-Poems, characterizes the very essence of things: whoever has passed through the gates of the fortifications of Terezín, can never rid himself of the magnetic field of the so-called "ghetto." And what is more, this magnetic power often draws within its circle the inspiration of those that were saved from the fate of deportation and life in this "waiting room to death." This is why in the ghetto itself there already arose pictures and drawings, poetry and prose, works of music and creative art, dealing with ghetto themes, this is why these themes did not disappear even after the liberation, from literature, music, plastic art and films. It may be said that the largest contribution in this direction comes from Czechoslovakia, though in many other countries, especially in the field of literature, works were created attracting attention far beyond the frontiers of the countries of their birth, such as H. G. Adler's books *Theresienstadt, das Antlitz einer Zwangsgemeinschaft* and *Die verheimlichte Wahrheit* (GFR), or books dealing with Terezín, published in England (Zděnek Lederer), in Denmark (M. Oppenhejm), Italy (Benjamin Murmelstein), in the German Federal Republic (Dr. Käthe Starke-Goldschmied).

Undoubtedly the first publication concerning the ghetto of Terezín was the book issued by the repatriation committee of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Social Welfare and Safety at Work in Prague as early as September 1945, under the title *Terezín-Ghetto.* It falls only partly within the framework of this article, as far as its three introductory articles are concerned. In one of them, entitled "The Fates of the Terezín Ghetto," the last chairman of the Terezín self-government, George Vogel, submits a brief outline of the history of the ghetto. Otherwise the book offers, however, to those who know how to read statistics shattering information: it states all transports to Terezín and from Terezín, with full figures and the more than modest list of names of those that lived to see the day of liberation in Terezín.

The first to draw on Terezín themes (and also themes from other concentration camps) for his literary work was the Prague writer František R. Kraus with his book *Gas, Gas... and then Fire,* published in the autumn of 1945. It was followed soon by Mirek Tůma's book *The Ghetto of Our Days,* Olga Semecká's *Terezín Torso* and a book of memoirs by Anna Auředníčková *Three Years in Terezin.* The book by Dr. Richard Feder *Terezín—A Jewish Tragedy, Last Act,* as well as the study by Dr. Emil Utitz *Psychology of Life in the Concentration Camp Terezín* closes the first period, during which works inspired by the Terezín ghetto expressed themselves in a somewhat elementary form.

In the year 1951 a completely unknown young student by the name of Arnošt Lustig published a short story in the *Bulletin of the Jewish Religious Communities* drawing on Terezín experiences for his subject matter. He had been deported there himself when fifteen years old. Lustig later wrote another short story with a similar plot, which was also published for the first time either in the *Bulletin of the Jewish Religious Communities* or the *Jewish Yearbook.* In the year 1955 the "Mladá fronta" publishing house published Lustig's collected short stories under the title *Night and Hope.* This almost created a literary sensation. Suddenly a mature writer treating new subject matter had emerged, with an entirely individual style. Shortly afterwards Lustig published another collection of short stories entitled *Diamonds of the Night,* and also

dealing with ghetto themes. In his further literary work, memories of the Terezín ghetto crop up, sometimes more, sometimes less insistently, as for instance in his tale "My Friend Villi Feld." The Terezín stories by Arnošt Lustig were published several times by various publishers; under the title *Day and Night* a selection was published, which appeared also in the German translation of Lotte Elsnerova and Rudolf Iltis under the title *Demanten der Nacht.* (Artia Publishing House, Prague). This publishing house is also preparing a Spanish translation, whilst an Ivrit edition is being got ready in Izrael. The collection of Lustig's work is also under preparation in Vietnam. Separate short stories dealing with Terezín ghetto subjects have been translated into Slovak, Polish, Hungarian, Slovene, Lusation Serbian and Japanese, Italian and Yiddish. A selection of Lustig's stories was published in 1963 in London and New York under the title, *Night and Hope.*

For nearly ten years—so he says himself—Josef Bor worked on his novel *The Deserted Doll* before publishing it. He takes his reader through the ghetto of Terezín, where he introduces him first of all to the courageous and active group of "carters" and then to the concentration camps of Auschwitz and Buchenwald. *The Deserted Doll* has been translated into German and Hungarian.

One of the Czech critics called Bor's second book, published by the Československý Spisovatel publishing house in 1963 under the title *Terezín Requiem* a "singing tragedy." It was published simultaneously in London and New York in the translation by Edith Pargeter. The Hebrew lament for the dead mingles with the mass for the dead composed on Latin Catholic liturgic texts and becomes "a mass that the Jews played and sang for themselves". Josef Bor describes the dramatic events around the staging of Verdi's "Requiem" by the prisoners of the Terezín ghetto, conducted by conductor and composer Rafael Schächter under circumstances that are only possible when people know that they are on the threshold of death.

Bor's short novel also appeared in German. A Dutch and a Hebrew edition are under preparation. Bor has recently finished a new novel also based on his experiences in the ghetto of Terezín. The hero is a prisoner who takes leave of life before departing from Terezín in a death transport, by playing for the last time Beethoven's "Appassionata" on the piano.

In 1961 the "Naše Vojsko" publishing house published a book under the title *Children's Diaries* in the edition of the Union of Anti-Fascist Fighters. This is a collection of passages from diaries written by children during the Second World War. The collection contains several excerpts from the Terezín diary of Helga Weissová-Hošková, who was deported with her parents to the Terezín ghetto at the age of twelve. She also passed through the concentration camps of Auschwitz, Freiberg and Mauthausen.

Jiří Weil has erected an eternal literary monument to the Czech Jews who died at the hand of the Nazi murderers in his slender book so rich in content, entitled *Elegy to Death 77,297.* The motif of Terezín echoes several times in this brief but poetically presented history of the suffering and courage of the Czech Jews.

At the beginning of 1964 the "Naše vojsko" publishing house published in the edition of the Union of Anti-Fascist Fighters the book by Karl Lagus and Josef Polák entitled *Town Behind Bars,* showing and proving that the Terezín ghetto, called



73 Mourning for the artist Bedřich Fritta



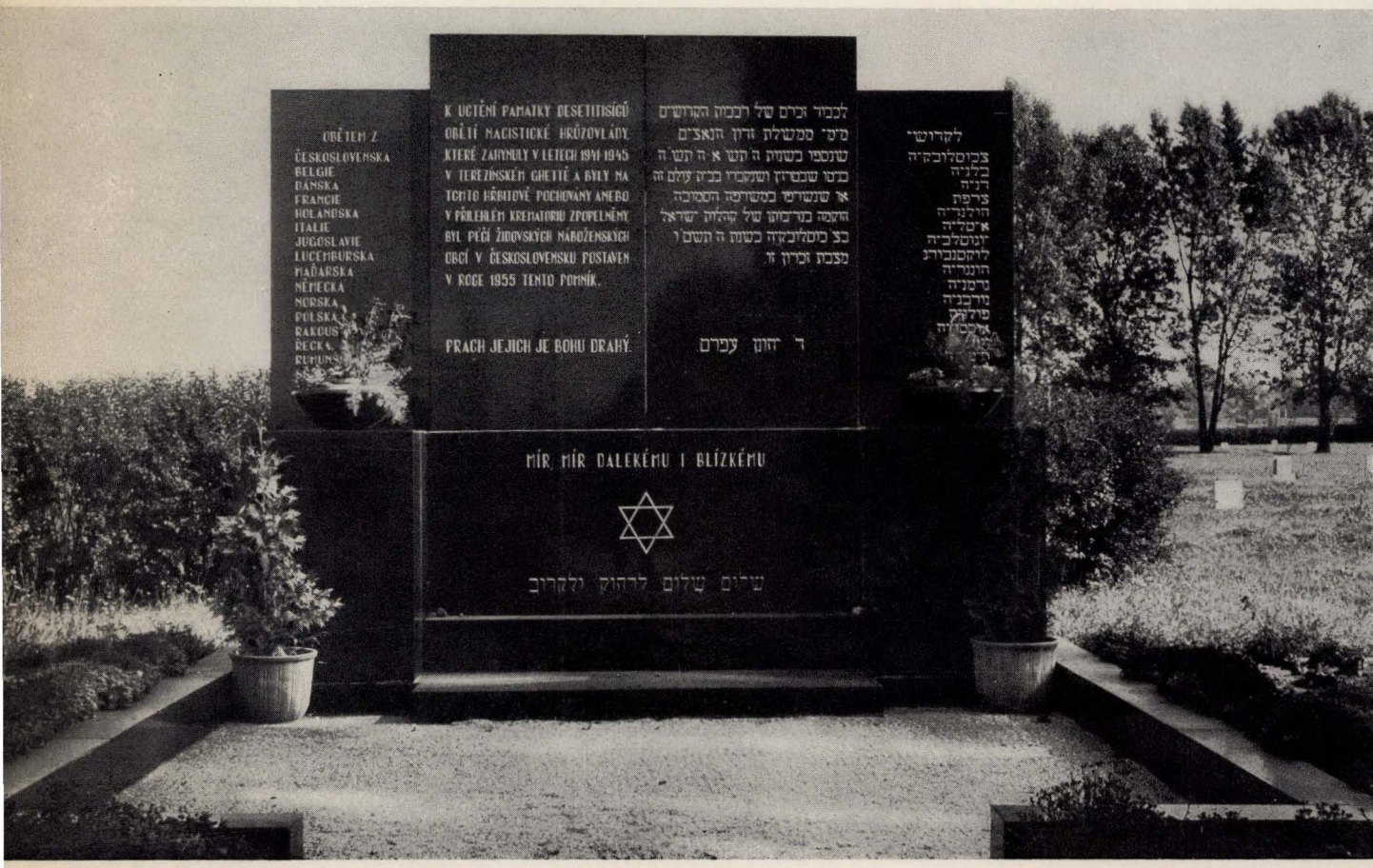
74 Memorial plaque with the inscription: "This tree was planted by Jewish youth in the Terezín Ghetto on the New Year of trees (15th Shevat), and was on the same day in 1948 transplanted by the Religious Community in Prague in this cemetery and taken under their protection."

75 Memorial plaque with the names of 16 executed inmates, with the inscription:
"On this spot lie the remains of people who perished at the hands of the executioner, that we might live!"





76 The Chairman of the Vienna Jewish Religious Community Dr. Emil Feldsberg, together with the Head Rabbi of Prague Dr. Richard Feder and the Chairman of the Council of Jewish Religious Communities in the Czech Lands František Ehrmann honour the memory of the martyrs



"Ghettoparadies," "Altersghetto" and even "Spa Teresienstadt" by the Nazis, was indeed a concentration camp. Both the authors, Josef Polák as a worker of the Terezín registry and Karel Lagus as a worker of the State Jewish Museum in Prague, have assembled much hitherto unknown material about the Terezín ghetto in their book, which partly represents a polemic discussion about the Terezín ghetto, polemicizing with some views expressed in the books by H. G. Adler.

Erich Kulka, who cooperated in the documentary book about Auschwitz *The Death Factory*, has written a short story called *Escape*. There he describes, on the basis of facts the courageous and adventurous escape of the prisoner Vítězslav Lederer, who twice secretly entered the Terezín ghetto to warn the inmates of the "Transports to the East," which were in facts transports to death.

The already mentioned František R. Kraus is now preparing a complete edition of his short stories dealing with Terezín themes, that have so far appeared in various magazines. Of these we may mention "Lidice is in Europe," "Floria Tosca", "The Finch," and his recently finished novel, *Hangmen Without Shadow*, reviving the gloomy atmosphere of the Terezín ghetto.

It would be difficult to enumerate all the articles dealing with Terezín and published by various authors in various Czechoslovak magazines. Here we must especially mention Norbert Frýd, František Goldscheider, Rudolf Iltis, František R. Kraus, who deal especially with the cultural aspect of this theme.

Whereas the number of prose writers drawing on motifs from the Terezín ghetto amounts to more than a dozen, there is only one surviving author, whose lyric works have been influenced by her more than two years' forced stay at the Terezín ghetto. Dagmar Berzetti-Hilarová was already writing poems as a fifteen-year-old in the Terezín ghetto, but for many years she kept them in a drawer. Only when they discovered her talent in the editorial office of the Prague newspaper *Obrana lidu* did she start to publish them. They appeared in the magazines *Hlas revoluce*, *Československý voják*, and in the *Bulletin of the Jewish Religious Communities*. Almost the entire cycle of her Ghetto Poems has successively been published in the last three volumes of the *Jewish Yearbook*.

Her poems have appeared in Basel, Berlin, Dresden, Prague and Rostock in the German translation by Rudolf Iltis. A collection of her poems will appear at the beginning of next year as part of the collection of poems entitled *A Rainbow has a Hundred Colours* translated by Rudolf Iltis and published by the "Verlag der Nation" in Berlin. A Hebrew translation is under preparation, separate poems have been translated into French, Polish, and English (by J. Sonntag, London).

The Terezín ghetto was experienced by everyone in a different way. And according to the activities the inmates had to carry out in the ghetto, various monographs appeared after the war describing Terezín as seen by a doctor (Dr. Erich Springer, Dr. Josef Podvinec), hygienist, disinfector, pedagogue, etc.

The experiences of Terezín had so strong an influence that, even after many years, they compelled two women artists to express them in their artistic creation.

Helga Weissová-Hošková had already been painting as a child in the Terezín ghetto. But impressions gained there were cut so deeply into her memory that again and again she takes up her brush to paint a scene from the ghetto or some other concentration camp through which she passed. The same is the case of the

"naive" painter Kamila Hájková. She also recollects her forced stay behind the walls of the Terezín ghetto in her creation, and reading Dagmar Hilarová's poems she was inspired to paint further pictures with ghetto motifs. Jiří Valdštýn-Karlínsky is now working on a picture, the subject of which he had dealt with already once before in the ghetto itself: "The Last Supper Before the Transport to the East . . ."

Jarmila Weinbergrová-Mařanová (born 1922) did not see the Terezín ghetto with her own eyes, but learned to know it only through what her mother told her, which inspired her to paint a series of pictures entitled "The Terezín Ghetto." She uses symbolism and not descriptive realism to express the shattering facts. Her creation proves the extent of the inspiring force of the ghetto, a proof that we meet also in other branches of creative art.

Writer Josef Škvorecký wrote a short story dedicated to his friend Weiss, murdered by the Nazis, who was forced to play in the "Ghetto-Swingers" a Jazz group formed in the Terezín ghetto for propaganda purposes. National Artist, writer and painter Dr. Adolf Hoffmeister has just finished a monograph dealing with the life and work of the composer Jan Krása, who was imprisoned in the Terezín ghetto; and here the Terezín motif appears again when he writes about the children's opera "Brundibár," an opera composed by Jan Krása to the libretto by Adolf Hoffmeister, which was performed more than fifty times in the Terezín ghetto.

The Musicologist I. Pedotti (Brno) has written a monograph entitled "Music in Terezín." Personalities like Gideon Klein, Rafael Schächter, Pavel Haas, Jan Krása, Karel Ančerl and a whole series of our conductors and composers, as well as performing artists and musical life influenced by them are indeed a rich source for the scholar in the field of music.

And what about music itself?

Lustig's collection of Terezín stories *Night and Hope* have inspired the Czech composer Otomar Mácha to compose a symphonic poem of the same name. The composer did not merely present in this a musical illustration of Lustig's stories, but endeavoured to record the terror of the ghetto atmosphere and in musical language express the mental conflicts of the prisoners, their vacillation between hope and despair, and their struggle between darkness and the dawn of a new freedom and human dignity.

The poem by the young Terezín prisoner Pavel Friedmann who was murdered by the Nazis, entitled "Butterflies Do not Live in the Ghetto" has become famous throughout the world of culture. (We print it here in the English translation by J. Sonntag.) It has given its name to the film, the book and the exhibitions of drawings and poems by Jewish children imprisoned by the Nazis in the ghetto of Terezín and by its austere, but nevertheless, or just because of *this*, extremely poetic style it has inspired two Czechoslovak composers: Karel Reiner and Gustav Křivinka.

Karel Reiner, himself once a prisoner in Terezín, composed an orchestral suite entitled "Butterflies Do Not Live Here," drawing on his own creation from earlier times, the original music to the film "Butterflies Do Not Live Here," a documentary based on the story by Dr. Hana Volavková and Jiří Weil and shot by the Documentary Film Studio in Prague.

"Butterflies Do Not Live Here" is also the title of an oratory cantata for orchestra,

children's choir, soprano and bass, whose basic theme is the setting to music of Friedmann's poem. Its author is Gustav Křivinka from Brno, who finished it in 1962.

The musicality of Dagmar Hilarová's poems from the cycle "Terezín Ghetto" and the ease with which they may be sung did not escape the Czech composers' attention. The Prague composer Josef Chaloupka has set to music the poem "A Windy Night," "Terezín café," "Rations," "Grandmother," "Bread," and "Love" for piano and bass. Jiří Smutný has written the music to the poem "Thirty Words" for male choir, piano, double bass and drums.

Here must also be mentioned the symphonic music of Jiří Sternwald for two Czechoslovak feature films dealing with Terezín, Radok's "The Long Road" and Brynych's "Transport from Paradise."

This has brought us to another field of artistic creation that more than once drew its subject matter from Terezín motifs, the ghetto and the "Small Fortress," the police prison of the Gestapo separated in space from it by a mere 700 or 800 metres.

The famous film and theatre director Alfred Radok shot a film in the year 1948 for the Barrandov studios of the Czechoslovak State Film entitled "The Long Road," based on the book by Erik Kolár, that is laid partly in Nazi-occupied Prague and partly in the ghetto of Terezín. The film describes the tragic fate of the Kaufmann family during the Hitler persecution of the Jews. Only one member of the family survives, the daughter, a doctor married to a non-Jew.

The Studio of Documentary Films then took up the Terezín theme. Under the directorship of Mirko Bernát a shattering documentary was shot: "Butterflies Do Not Live Here." The camera took shots particularly of the now famous child drawings from Terezín, some drawings by the painters Fritta and Karel Fleischmann. The very poetic commentary was written by the late Jiří Weil and the music composed by Karel Reiner.

Further films shot by the Studio of Documentary Films such as "Under the Sign of the Smoke" (directed by Bruno Šefranka), "Roses and Casemates," "Picture Postcard for the Hangman," (both directed by Drahoslav Holub) recall motifs from the Terezín ghetto, though the main theme of the two last named is "The Small Fortress."

In 1961 the young director of the Prague studios for feature films Dušan Klein—then still a student at the Film Faculty of the Prague Academy of Music Sciences, chose for his dissertation the directing of the film "The White Rabbit," based on a short story by Arnošt Lustig, though the book considerably differed from the original. In April 1962 the Czechoslovak Television televised an original television film "Terezín," shot according to the script of Rudolf Iltis and Karel Knobloch after the book by Arnošt Lustig and Ervín Solan. It was the first Czechoslovak document dedicated to the history and true essence of the Terezín ghetto.

In May 1964 director Zbyněk Brynych was awarded a State Prize for his artistic presentation of the life of the prisoners in the Terezín ghetto in the feature film "Transport from Paradise," which was awarded first prize at the XVIth International Film Festival in Locarno in the summer of 1963. In this film, based on Arnošt Lustig's stories from the Terezín ghetto and with the script of the two authors Lustig and Brynych, the Terezín inferno was brought to life on the screen in a

masterly work of high artistic level, created with great artistic inspiration and fine psychological understanding.

It may be presumed that not even the film "Theresienstadt" now completed by the Italian director Carlo di Carlo will be the last film dealing with themes from the Terezín ghetto. For the west German dramatist and television worker Erwin Sylvanus is thinking of shooting a television film "Children of Terezin," with Peter Ehmke as producer and director. Sylvanus also intends to shoot a documentary about "Leo Baeck in Terezin."

We believe that neither film artists, nor writers, poets, sculptors, painters and composers have yet said their last word on the subject that offers itself with such urgency as the theme of the "Terezín ghetto," for its cultural heritage is inexhaustible, and the courage of its prisoners arising from their invincible optimism and will to conquer over fascism by the strength of the spirit has not yet been fully appreciated.

Prague, September 1964.

WHO'S WHO

ANČERL, KAREL, was born on April 11, 1908, in Tučapy, South Bohemia. Before the war he acted as conductor of orchestras in Berlin, Strassbourg, and then in the Liberated Theatre in Prague. Until the war broke out he also conducted the orchestra for the Prague Radio. In 1942 he was deported to Terezín, where he worked in the kitchen and devoted his free time to music, serving as conductor. In 1944 he was taken off to Auschwitz and Friedland, returning home in 1945.
Today Karel Ančerl is chief conductor of the largest orchestra in Czechoslovakia, the Czech Philharmonic in Prague.

BERMAN, Karel, soloist at the opera of the National Theatre and professor of vocal training at the Conservatory and the Academy of Musical Arts, was born in 1919 in the South Bohemian town of Jindřichův Hradec. He showed musical talent at an early age and when he was sixteen years old had already founded and was conducting a student symphonic orchestra. He entered the Prague Conservatory on the eve of the Second World War. During the Nazi occupation he was interned in the concentration camps of Terezín, Auschwitz and Kaufering. After three and a half years of bare existence he returned to Prague, half dead and exhausted, to continue in his studies and then to take part in the new cultural life. After graduation he was offered positions as soloist and conductor in the leading theatres. In 1951 he won the prize in the Czechoslovak arts competition, receiving a gold medal for distinguished interpretation. Later he was engaged as soloist in the National Theatre in Prague, and now makes guest appearances at other theatres at home and abroad. He also sings in the radio and television, makes recordings, translates and arranges musical dramatic works, composes, and acts as director and concert singer.

BIČ, MILOŠ, Dr. was born on November 19, 1910, studied at the Hus Evangelical Theological Faculty in Prague and at the same time studied Semitic philology at the Philosophy Faculty at Charles University. In 1930—31 he attended the university in Marburg, Germany and in 1933—34 in Montpellier, France. He was imprisoned under the Nazi occupation for taking part in the resistance movement. From May 28, 1940, to May 21, 1945, he was in Nazi prisons in Klatovy, Pilsen, Prague (Pankrác), and did penal servitude in Ebrach, Dresden and Waldheim, and in the Terezín (Small Fortress), Buchenwald and Dachau concentration camps. His mother and other next of kin died as victims of SS frenzies during the fighting for Prague, May 7, 1945.
Academic course: degree of Doctor of Theology in 1936 in Prague. Immediately after return from Dachau in 1945, answered the call of the faculty council to substitute in teaching Hebrew, assistant professor in 1946 in Old Testament studies; since 1948 professor in this field at the Hus Faculty, now (since 1950) called the Jan Amos Comenius Faculty, in 1954—58, Assistant Dean of the faculty.

BOR, JOSEF, Dr. was born July 2, 1906, in Ostrava. On June 1, 1942, he was deported to Terezín and October 28, 1944, to Auschwitz-Birkenau. In January 1945, he was then taken off to Buchenwald and in June 1945 returned to Prague. He is employed as technical official. He is the author of *Opuštěná panenka* (Abandoned Girl) and *Terezínské rekviem* (Terezín Requiem).

DIAMANT, JIŘÍ, Dr. was born May 4, 1930, in Brno. March 23, 1942, he was transported to Terezín and from there to Birkenau. In the night of July 9 to 10, 1944, his parents and brother perished in the gas chambers. On January 18, 1945, he was sent on the "death

march" through Loslau and from there in open cars through Breslau and Gross Rosen to Buchenwald.
After the war he completed secondary school studies and then at the Philosophy Faculty in Brno. He now works as clinical psychologist at the Psychiatry Clinic in Charles University and is completing his studies at the Medical Faculty.

EHRMANN, FRANTIŠEK, was born December 10, 1899, in Spálené Poříčí, near Pilsen. After graduation he engaged in insurance work until 1939. Then the country was occupied by the Nazis, and soon Ehrmann was arrested for illegal activity, but was released in a short while. When the deportation of Jews began, the Ehrmanns managed to hide in a friendly, non-Jewish family near his birthplace and there were able to survive until liberation. In the years following, he was active not only in his work, but in various societies and institutions as well. He was elected Chairman of the Council of Jewish Religious Communities, first in 1959, and again in 1963.

FEDER, RICHARD, Dr. PhD., was born in 1875. He graduated from the academic secondary school in Prague, the Philosophical Faculty and then the Israel Theological Institute in Vienna. He acted as rabbi in Kojetín, Roudnice-nad-Labem, Louny and Kolín-nad-Labem. After the death of Dr. Gustav Sicher he was elected Head Rabbi of the Jewish Religious Communities in Bohemia. He was interned three years in Terezín with his wife, three adult children and his grandchildren. None of the family besides Dr. Feder returned from the Nazi concentration camp. Dr. Feder has written a textbook in Hebrew, a history of the Jews in Palestine, four books for young people and *Židovská tragedie* (The Jewish Tragedy), telling of the suffering of the Jews in Terezín. He is still active as a writer.

FLEISCHMANN, KAREL, Dr. was born in 1897 in Klatovy,Bohemia, the son of a typographer. After graduating from secondary schools and medical college, he became a specialist in dermatology in České Budějovice. He devoted his free time to art and from 1930 to 1937 published several series of woodcuts and lithographs, also writing works of prose and verse. In April 1942 he was deported to Terezín, where he worked as doctor. Even there he found time to draw, paint, and write. Most of his pictures and two volumes of poetry were preserved, thanks to the resistance groups in the camp. In October 1944, he and his wife were both deported to Auschwitz, where both were sent to the gas chambers.

FLUSSER, JINDŘICH, M. D., was born in Prague in 1917, and studied at the medical faculty in Prague, but was not able to finish his studies, because in December 1941 he was deported to Terezín, where he worked as orderly. From Terezín he was deported to Blechhammer-Buchenwald. In May 1945 he returned to his home country, finished his medical course and is now active as a doctor in Prague.

FRANĚK, RUDOLF, was born September 23, 1921, in Prague. After his pre-war studies, he was deported in 1943 to Terezín and thence in 1944 to Auschwitz, returning in May 1945. He is married and has two children. He now is principal of a secondary school in Prague.

FREYOVÁ-LEDERER OVÁ, ANNY, was born November 15, 1906, in Vienna. In 1934 she married a doctor from Most and they had a son. Dr. Lederer was executed in July 1942, in Mauthausen. In 1942 Anny Freyová was deported to Terezín, where she was active in the "Freizeitgestaltung"; she returned from Terezín in 1945 and was engaged as a singer in the Teplice theatre.

FRITTA, BEDŘICH, (actual name Taussig) was born in 1909 in Ivančice in the Hana region in Moravia. He worked in Prague for a long time as graphic artist and painter. In 1942 he was deported to Terezín. There he also had the opportunity to paint and gave a true picture of the Terezín ghetto in his sketches and paintings. In July 1944 his work, designated as "Greuelpropaganda" by the Nazis, was discovered. Fritta, his wife and three-year-old son were imprisoned in the Small Fortress in Terezín. There his wife died. He himself was deported to the camp in Auschwitz and died. His son Tomáš still lives in Prague; he had been adopted by Fritta's friend, the painter Leo Haas.

FRÝD, NORBERT, Dr. was born April 21, 1913, in České Budějovice, South Bohemia. He studied history of literature at Charles University in Prague, supporting himself by working

on newspapers and in film. He received his doctoral degree at the university. He spent sixteen months in Terezín and then was sent in a transport to Auschwitz and thence to Dachau-Kaufering. After the war, he returned to work as publicist, then spent four years as cultural attaché at the Czechoslovak embassies in Mexico and the United States. He has been working as free-lance writer since 1953. His series of novels begins with the historical composition *Divná píseň* (Strange Song). The novel based on a Mexican background, *Studna supů* (Vultures' Well) has gone through many editions. His greatest success so far has been won by the novel of concentration camp life, *Krabice živých* (A Box of Lives, published in English in 1962), first published in Czech in 1956, followed by six subsequent editions. It has been translated into eleven languages. Then followed a volume of short stories *Tři malé ženy* (Three Little Women) and his latest (1964) is *Sloup vody* (Column of Water). Very popular with his readers are Frýd's travel books *Mexiko je je v Americe* (Mexico is in America) *Usměvavá Guatemala* (Smiling Guatemala), *S pimprlaty do Kalkaty* (Taking Puppets to Calcutta), and many translations have been made of them.

FUCHS, FRANTIŠEK, was born July 23, 1905, in Radošovice, South Bohemia. Before the war he worked as a construction engineer and when he was deported (July 15, 1943) to Terezín, he did work in his own field. After liberation he returned to Prague, where he works as head engineering designer. Since 1945 he has held the post of vice chairman of the Council of Jewish Religious Communities in the Czech regions.

HAAS, LEO, was born in 1901 in Opava, Moravia. He was interested in painting from early youth and received special training in Karlsruhe and Berlin. He worked as a painter in Vienna and then in his birthplace, where he was also active as art director in a lithographic printing shop. He worked in progressive art organizations and tried to bring Czech and German artists closer together. When the Nazis invaded the country he was arrested and taken off to the concentration camp in Nisko. He was interned in Terezín, and because of his illegal activity was confined in the Small Fortress, whence he was taken to Auschwitz and then to Sachsenhausen. When this camp was evacuated in 1945 he was sent to the concentration camp in Mauthausen. After liberation he worked as painter for ten years in Prague. Since 1955 he has been living in the German Democratic Republic, where he sketches for television and film. He contributes to a number of foreign magazines. His work has been exhibited in various countries and has been given recognition and awards.

HAAS, PAVEL (June 21, 1899—October 17, 1944), was a distinguished representative of the Janáček school of composition. He was born in Brno and worked there. He was interned in Terezín from 1941 to 1944 and died in Auschwitz. His compositions are noted for their fresh melodic line and resourcefulness in rhythm, they are witty and have an immediacy of musical quality, but are also capable of arousing emotion by their profound expression of human tragedy. His last works are a reaction to personal and national suffering at the time of the German occupation. Haas developed toward a personal synthesis of influences of Moravian folk songs, Janáček and western modern composers, such as Stravinsky, together with elements of expression from Jewish music. In addition to numerous song cycles, he wrote a Piano Suite, a Suite for Oboe and Piano, three string quartets, two quintets, Mournful Scherzo for orchestra, Overture, the 29th Psalm, for the radio, a Symphony and opera Charlatan. From a large number of compositions which he wrote in Terezín, the following have been preserved: Study for String Orchestra, and Four Songs to words of Chinese poetry, one of the best works to appear during the war.

HÁJKOVÁ, KAMILA, was born in 1904, in Berlin. There she graduated from school and worked as an accountant and as a ladies' tailor. In 1934 she went to Czechoslovakia, as a citizen of this country. She married in Prague. She started her carreer in painting only after her return from the Terezín ghetto. Today she is one of the leading representatives of the "naive" school of painting in Czechoslovakia. She has had several shows of her own work and also in collective exhibitions of naive art held by the National Gallery in Prague, Brno and Ostrava. Professional critics find that the paintings by Kamila Hájková have something of the visionary in them.

HIFT, LUDWIG, Dr. was born March 9, 1899, in Vienna. There he served as Commercial Councillor and was imprisoned in Tere-

zín from October 2, 1942, until 1945, having lived to see the end of the Nazi period. He returned to Austria and now lives in Vienna again.

HILAR, EVŽEN, was born February 7, 1915, in Chrudim and after graduation was employed as office worker. Under the occupation he worked at manual labour until 1941. When his parents and sister were sent from Terezín in a transport to Poland, he escaped with two of his fellow inmates. One was shot and the other captured. After his escape, he left Bohemia for Slovakia and there took part in the Slovak Uprising in the summer of 1944. When the Slovak Uprising was defeated by the Wehrmacht, he continued partisan fighting with his group up to the end of the year 1944, when he was gravely wounded by being shot in the abdomen. He was captured by the Gestapo but was later liberated by the advancing Czechoslovak Army Corps. He returned home severely disabled.

HILAROVÁ DAGMAR, née Berzettiová, was born in Prague in 1928 and at the age of fourteen was deported to the Terezín ghetto. There she worked as dental assistant. After liberation she returned to Prague, where she finished her education. In 1947 she married Evžen Hilar, a former officer, who was invalided in the war, and is the mother of a son. Hilarová has published poems in several journals in Czechoslovakia and her lyric compositions have been translated into other languages.

HOFER, HANUŠ, (professional name of Hanuš Schulhof), the son of an actor, was born in Prague in 1907. When he moved to Vienna in 1924, he became active in the theatre there. After the Nazis occupied Austria, he returned to Prague, where he was engaged in a Jewish cabaret until 1941. In 1942 he was deported to Terezín and there worked in his field also. In 1944 he was sent to Auschwitz and from there to Kaufering-Allach. He returned home in July 1945 and after working briefly for the Jewish Religious Communities in Prague, he was engaged by various theatres. Since 1960 he has been active in the People's Theatre (Volkstheater) in Rostock, German Democratic Republic.

ILTIS, RUDOLF, Dr. was born in Prague in 1899, and studied in the field of Germanistics and law. Before the war he worked as office employee and editor. Under the Nazi occupation he was sent to forced labour and finally deported to Terezín. Since July 1945 he has been editor-in-chief of the publication department of the Council of Jewish Religious Communities in the Czech regions. He is active as free-lance writer, as translator into German and film-adviser.

KIEN, PETR, was born in 1919 in Varnsdorf, where his father owned a small textile factory. After the Czech border regions were separated off by the Munich, Dictate the Kien family fled to the interior, but was deported from there in 1941 to Terezín. When Kien's parents were put in a transport to the East, Petr Kien voluntarily joined them and perished with them in Auschwitz. Even as a child Kien showed his many talents. He was a musician, poet, and primarily a graphic painter, with a strong bent for caricature. A few hundred of Kien's drawings have been preserved from the period before he was deported to Terezín, and quite a number of drawings and paintings that originated while Kien was in Terezín. Several poems have also survived, showing that Kien's lyrical talent was as noteworthy as his art.

KINSKY, HELGA, was born in 1930 in Vienna. After the Nazis had occupied Austria, she attended school in Brno and in Kyjov, Moravia, where her father had also fled from Vienna. In January 1943, she was deported to Terezín and from there to Auschwitz in 1944. After Auschwitz came forced labour in a work camp Oederan (part of the concentration camp Flossenburg), and, when it was disbanded, again to Terezín in a transport. After liberation she returned with her father to Kyjov, where she attended secondary school. After staying two and a half years with her mother and studying in England (where her mother had lived from the early part of 1939) she married and now lives in Vienna.

KLEIN, GIDEON, was born December 6, 1919, in Přerov, Moravia. Even at a very early age his musical talent was evident. After graduating from secondary school. In Prague he registered at the Philosophical Faculty, Charles University and at the same time studied at the Master School in the Conservatory in Prague under Professor V. Kurz. At the evening concerts given for the public by the school he

performed with great success. When he received his diploma from the Master School (he graduated June 22, 1939, playing Beethoven's Concerto No. 4 with masterful ability), his work was evaluated by Professor Kurz, also director of the State Conservatory at the time, in the following words: "His artistic maturity is outstanding. His faultless performances bear the imprint of his own individuality. One feels in his interpretation an equally correct style, not only in the classical and romantic compositions, but also in the modern ones. The technical level of this exceptionally talented pianist is first class."

The occupation prevented further public performances. Klein also studied composition with Professor Alois Hába. Some attempts at composition are left from the period before Terezín. He was one of the first to be deported to Terezín, December 1, 1941. As soon as the first opportunity presented itself he turned again, under unimaginably difficult conditions, to his artistic activity. He was one of the first to work at his art in Terezín; he also devoted time to composition and composed three string quartets, a trio for strings, songs, a sonata for piano. He arranged some folk songs for the chorus founded in Terezín by R. Schächter, and composed a chorus for male voices to the texts of folk poetry, "The First Sin," and also wrote two madrigals for the male chorus. His song cycle entitled "The Plague," that was performed in Terezín by the excellent alto singer Hilda Lindt-Aronson, was not preserved.

On October 16, 1944, he was taken from Terezín by transport to Auschwitz, and then to the concentration camp Fürstengrube. He died at the end of January 1945. In 1946 the society "Přítomnost" held a concert of his compositions and A. Hába opened it with introductory words. His trio for strings and his piano sonata have been played by many musicians at home and abroad.

KLEIN, OTA, Dr. was born February 21, 1921, in Prague, was deported in 1941 to Terezín and in 1944 to Auschwitz, and after that to Buchenwald. He returned to Prague April 25, 1945, where he now works as a scientific worker in the Czechoslovak Academy of Science.

KRÁSA, HANUŠ, was born November 30, 1899, in Prague, where he graduated from the secondary school that prepared for university. At the same time he studied composition and orchestra conducting from Zemlinský. In 1920 Universal Edition (UE) published his "Orchestergrotesken" with baritone solo. Schott Publishers published his String Quartet and in 1924 his Symphony for Chamber Orchestra appeared in UE, which also published his Song for Alto. His operatic works are excellent. On a theme by Dostoievsky he wrote the opera, "Verlobung in Traum" (Betrothal in Dream), which had its première at the German Theatre in Prague. He also wrote the opera, "Lysistrata," a cantata on psalms, for soloists, chorus and orchestra, "Die Erde ist des Herrn" (The Earth is the Lord's). It was published by UE in 1932. He composed background music for Adolf Hoffmeister's, "Youth in the Game," which had its first performance in 1934. In 1936 the first performance was given of "Chamber Music for Harpsichord and Seven Instruments," and in 1938 he wrote the opera for children "Brundibár," to the libretto by Hoffmeister.

Hanuš Krása was sent off in a transport to Terezín, where he wrote songs to texts by Nezval, re-scored and arranged Brundibár (for further details see article by Lagus). He perished in Auschwitz.

For his work in general and for the opera, "Betrothal in Dream" in particular, he was awarded the Czechoslovak State Prize for music in 1933.

KRAUS, FRANTIŠEK R., was born in 1905 in Prague. He worked as journalist for a number of Prague dailies, for news agencies and the radio. In addition, he wrote books of fiction and reportages. In 1941 he was deported to Terezín, where he did manual labour. In the autumn of 1944 he was taken off to Auschwitz, and thence to Gleiwitz and Blechhammer. After liberation he worked at the Czechoslovak Radio and at literary activities. He still writes and contributes to magazines at home and abroad.

KULKA, ERICH, was born February 18, 1911, in Vsetín, Moravia. After completing a technical education he worked as an expert in the woodworking industry. In June 1939 he was arrested because of anti-Nazi activity and imprisoned in various places. He spent more than two years in the death camp Auschwitz-Birkenau. When the camp was evacuated in January 1945, he escaped with his 12-year-old

son, who is now a scientific worker at the Hebrew university in Jerusalem. As member of the underground resistance movement, he maintained direct contact with Prague while in the Auschwitz concentration camp. With the commission for identification of war criminals he traced and identified SS-men from Auschwitz and testified against them in trials in Cracow, Warsaw, and Frankfurt on the Main. After the end of the war he has been a free-lance writer, dealing especially with themes taken from life in concentration camps. He is co-author of *Továrna na smrt* (Death Factory) and *Noc a mlha* (Night and Fog), which have been translated into several languages, and the author of *Útěk z Osvětimi* (Escape from Auschwitz) and *Frankfurtský proces* (The Frankfurt Trial).

LAGUS, KAREL, Dr. was born in Prague, June 12, 1903. After finishing the university he worked as a lawyer from 1931 to 1939. In the autumn he was arrested by the Gestapo while attempting to cross the frontier. He was imprisoned in Terezín from November 24, 1941, to October 28, 1944, when he was deported to Auschwitz. When he was being transported to the concentration camp of Gross-Rosen he managed to escape and could come out of hiding when liberated January 28, 1945, by the Soviet Army. After returning to Prague, he worked in various notable places until 1957, when the troubles he had gone through caused grave illness. Since the spring of 1959 he has been active again in the State Jewish Museum in Prague. He is author of the text and outline of many exhibitions and educational displays by the State Jewish Museum in Prague. He has co-authored with Josef Polák a book, published in 1964, entitled *Město za mřížemi* (Town Behind Bars), about the Terezín ghetto.

LANDOVÁ-MEROVÁ, EVA, was born December 25, 1930, in Prague. She was deported, together with her parents and sister, to Terezín on July 2, 1942, and from there with Transport Dr 1231 on Dec. 15, 1943 to Auschwitz, where her father died. She and her mother were deported to Stutthof and there her mother also perished. When the camp was evacuated, Eva Landová, completely exhausted and ill with typhus, hid under a straw stack, where soldiers of the Soviet Army found her. They gave her every care and medical treatment, and after a short period she was sent by hospital train to the rear. The commander of the train, Major Dr. Mer, took over the orphan, sent her to his home in Leningrad and there the Mer family adopted her. Today Eva Landová-Merová is married to an engineer, has two children, and teaches foreign languages at the Academy in Leningrad. She has visited her native land and city of Prague twice, most recently in 1960.

LAUSCHEROVÁ - KOHNOVÁ, IRMA, was born in 1910. She studied Germanistics at Prague's Charles University and then devoted herself to pedagogy. She taught at the five-class Jewish school in Prague and was the soul and spirit of the secret teaching of children in the Terezín ghetto. She resides in Prague at the present time.

LEDEČ, EGON, was born March 16, 1889, in Kostelec nad Orlicí. He studied violin at the Prague Conservatory, graduating in 1906. He then studied in the department of violin in the Prague School of Music, and in 1926 was engaged by the Czech Philharmonic as assistant concertmaster. On October 1, 1939, he was arrested and later taken to Terezín.
According to data furnished by Karel Ančerl, Ledeč was sent October 15, 1944, in a transport to Auschwitz and directly on the station platform was included in a group for the gas chambers.
Until the time of his arrest Egon Ledeč was developing a distinguished career as soloist on concert tours. He had a well-rounded musical education, and studied also as orchestra conductor at the Prague Conservatory.

LUSTIG, ARNOŠT, was born December 21, 1926, in Prague. At the age of sixteen he was deported, together with his mother, to the Terezín ghetto, and from there to Auschwitz in 1944, and then fourteen other Nazi concentration camps. After Czechoslovakia was liberated, Arnošt Lustig completed his education, graduated from the College of Journalism, and worked as editor of various papers published by "Mladá Fronta". He is now a writer of short stories, novels and film scenarios. His films have had great success at home and abroad.

MERELL, JAN Dr. D. Th., reached the age of sixty in May 1964. After finishing secondary school and four years of theological studies,

he took a position as Roman Catholic clergyman. He continued in his studies, however, completing the course at the Theological Faculty with the degree of Doctor of Theology. Studies of New Testament biblical science took him to Rome, to the Sorbonne in Paris, to Cambridge and Lovan. Until the Czech universities and colleges were forcibly closed, Dr. Merell lectured at the Theological Faculty of Charles University in Prague. Since he did not cease to teach Czech students even after the university was closed, the Nazis arrested him in 1943 and he was imprisoned in Terezín and Dachau up to the end of the war. His article in this book tells of his imprisonment in the Little Fortress in Terezín. Dr. Merell is the author of many theological works that are highly valued at home and abroad. He is Dean of the Roman Catholic Theological Faculty in Prague-Litoměřice and served as expert adviser to the concilliary Fathers from Czechoslovakia at the Second Vatican Concilium.

POLÁČEK, KAREL, was born in 1892 in Rychnov nad Kněžnou. He worked as journalist for various Prague papers. He won fame as the author of a number of books, short stories as well as novels, many of which were filmed. July 5, 1943, he was deported to Terezín and thence to Auschwitz in October 1944, where he soon died.

POLÁK, JOSEF, was born in 1905 in Řevnice, son of a small farmer. After graduating from secondary school he worked for a number of years in journalism, advertising and publicity. On November 30, 1941, he was sent in a workers' transport to the Terezín concentration camp, where his wife was also sent in a few days. There he worked from the very first in the department of record-keeping. He wrote about this work in his article, "Figures as Witnesses," that appears in this book. After liberation he volunteered to work until June in the liquidation of the Terezín concentration camp. When he returned home he worked in an office that was engaged in filing the Terezín transport lists that had been preserved and furnished information daily to those interested in the fate of the deported internees. The statistical and documentary material from Terezín that had been preserved was used by Polák in preparing a manuscript which was used by Zdeněk Lederer in 1953 for an English translation of a book about Terezín, published by the London publishers Edward Goldstone and Son. After working for a short while in the civil service he was forced, for reasons of health, to retire on pension. In his free time he collaborated with Dr. Lagus on the book about Terezín, which was published in Prague in 1964.

REINER, KAREL, Dr., was born June 27, 1910, in Žatec. He studied law and musicology at Charles University and later music with Alois Hába and Josef Suk. He was active as composer and pianist up until the time he was deported to Terezín. After liberation he again devoted himself to work as composer, publicist and organizer, and is now chairman of the Czech Musical Fund. He has composed a large number of musical works in the field of operatic, vocal, orchestral, and chamber music, and is the author of the background music for many plays, as well as symphonic music for the well-known film, "Butterflies Do Not Live Here."

SCHÄCHTER, RAFAEL, was born May 27, 1905, in Braila, Rumania, where his father was bandmaster. During the First World War the Schächters lived in Lvov (his mother came from Černovice and died in Lvov). After the war, Schächter came to Brno to take private lessons in piano playing with Professor Kurz, and composition with Jaroslav Kvapil. He then moved with Kurz to Prague, changed to Professor Hoffmeister, under whose tutelage he graduated from the school of master musicians in piano. He then studied composition with Rudolf Karel at the Conservatory, composing "Symfonietta" as his graduation piece in 1932. He then studied with Professor Dědeček in the department of orchestra conducting at the Conservatory and here conducted Novák's symphonic poem, "In the Tatra Mountains" as his graduation exercise in 1935.
He was engaged as pianist, from 1934 on, in E. F. Burian's theatre D 34. He was an excellent practise teacher, going over their roles with the singers, working with many outstanding singers of the National Theatre. In 1937 he founded the Chamber Music Opera, an association that performed hitherto unknown chamber music of all kinds, especially opera. With the chorus of the Opera he studied in particular two student plays of the Baroque period, "Luridi scholares" and "Errat unum cantor bonus". These were performed at the official opening of the Prague Exhibition of Bohemian Baroque in 1937. The performance had such success that the entire

cast was invited to give the programme in Switzerland. The tour did not take place, however, because of the political events that followed.

On November 27, 1942, Rafael Schächter was called up for a transport to Terezín. Immediately after he arrived there he formed a mixed choir in Terezín and soon began also to work with an orchestra and soloists. He directed the performance of "The Bartered Bride" there, as well as "The Kiss," also by Smetana, Mozart's "Marriage of Figaro," Verdi's "Requiem" and prepared Krása's "Brundibar." All these were performances on a high level. Rafael Schächter was one of the great hopes of the Czech school of conducting.

SCHÁLKOVÁ, MALVÍNA, was born February 18, 1882, in Prague. She graduated from secondary school in Prague and Vrchlabí, and studied at the university in Vienna. After she had completed her studies she painted the portraits of outstanding personages in Vienna, as well as interiors. In 1941 she was deported from Prague, where she had fled in the "Anschluss" period to live with her brother, to Terezín. In the Terezín ghetto she painted a graphic picture of the life of the internees. In 1944 she was sent in a transport to Auschwitz, where she perished.

SCHORSCH, GUSTAV, was born January 29, 1918. He prepared for the career of theatre director, helped to found the little theatre D 99, and, after he completed his studies at the Conservatory, worked for a short while in the National Theatre in Prague. The anti-Semitic laws made further activity impossible. In 1941 he was sent to a labour camp in Lípa near Havlíčkův Brod, and then to Terezín. There he worked in the cultural field as a director, translator and lecturer. In the autumn of 1944 Gustav Schorsch was deported to Auschwitz. According to the testimony of witnesses, he was shot by the Nazis in January 1945 when the camp Fürstengrube was being evacuated. He left behind him letters, diaries, notes on reading and, among other things, a radio play that was an adaptation of the novel by Thomas Mann, *Tonio Kröger.*

SCHWENK (Švenk), KAREL, was born on March 17, 1907, in Prague. In 1941 he was deported to Terezín, and then in 1944 to Auschwitz, where he died. Karel Schwenk was not only a talented musician, but also a writer. He was one of the founders of the avant-garde theatre, for which he composed songs and ditties, and also wrote the words for them, as well as sketches and episodes. He was a moving force in the Terezín ghetto's Czech theatre, and it is worthy of note that his play about the cyclists who bear the blame for everything was performed by the Prague theatre Rokoko, after the necessary adaptation, in 1961, and stayed in their repertoire for more than a year.

SOLAROVÁ, TRUDA, was born March 7, 1923 in Vienna, where she studied at the Conservatoire. After the "Anschluss" she moved to Czechoslovakia. Here she studied music with Professor Kurz, who taught her free of charge, since Jews were not allowed to attend the Conservatoire. In 1942 she was deported to Terezín and there worked in the "Jugendfürsorge" and the "Freizeitgestaltung." In 1944 she was sent off to Auschwitz, then to Freiberg and Mauthausen, where she remained until liberation. After returning to Czechoslovakia she has worked as translator and interpreter.

SPRINGER, ERICH Dr. M. D., was born in Mariánské Lázně, in 1908; he attended secondary school in that town and in Planá, studied medicine in Prague, graduating in 1933. He then worked as surgeon at the clinic of Professor Schloffer. He was deported to Terezín in Transport AK II, where he acted as head surgeon. After liberation in 1945 he returned from Terezín and since then has been head physician at the Rumburk hospital, director of the District Institute of National Health, and Regional Surgeon. He has received numerous awards for his work and is very popular in the entire region because of his activity.

SYNKOVÁ-MUNKOVÁ, ALENA, was born in 1926 in Prague. At the age of sixeen she was deported in 1942 to Terezín, where she remained until liberation in 1945. After her return to Prague she studied at the Journalism Faculty and then worked as editor. She now holds the position of scenario director in cartoon films.

ŠEDOVÁ, JANA, was born on February 26, 1920, in Chrudim, graduating there from the secondary school. She was unable to continue in academic studies because the Czech colleges

and universities were closed by the Nazis—and she would have been excluded as a Jew, anyway. Shortly after her marriage to Otto Popper, a technical employee, in November 1941, she was interned in the concentration camp Terezín. She returned alone in 1945, after liberation. Her husband and parents had died. In the camp she was employed at various manual tasks, but also first came in contact with dramatic activity. After her return she chose the stage for her life career. In addition she engages in literary work. She adapted the satirical cabaret sketch "The Last Cyclist" for the Rokoko theatre in Prague, where the performances met with success.

UNGAR, OTTO, was born on November 27, 1901, in Brno. He studied at the secondary school preparing for academic studies, and then attended the Academy of Creative Arts in Prague. Later he taught at the Jewish secondary school in Brno, in the department of painting, mathematics and geometry, until 1940. In 1942 he was deported to Terezín, together with his wife and seven-year-old daughter. In 1944 he was arrested with other painters who were alleged by the Nazis to have spread "Greuel-propaganda" by painting and drawing the realities of Terezín. His wife and daughter were also arrested and they were first sent to the Small Fortress and in 1944 to Auschwitz, where the Soviet Army liberated them in January 1945. Otto Ungar is reported to have participated in the Death March in January 1945 from Auschwitz to Buchenwald, where he lived to see liberation, though seriously ill, in April 1945. He died July 25, 1945 in a sanatorium in Blankenhein near Weimar, where he is buried.

UTITZ, EMIL, Dr., was born May 27, 1873, in Prague, where he was a fellow student at secondary school with Franz Kafka; he studied at the university in Prague, Munich, and Leipzig. After he graduated in 1906 he engaged in scientific work, became professor of psychology and esthetics, first in Rostock, and then in Halle and Prague. In these two fields he published 22 works and treatises. His chief works are *Grundlegung der allgemeinen Kunstwissenschaft* (Foundation for a General Science of Art) and *Geschichte der Aesthetik* (History of Esthetics). In 1942 Professor Utitz was deported to the Terezín ghetto with his wife. There he founded a library and for a long period was head of the arrangements for art, science and culture lectures. After liberation Professor Utitz continued his activity as writer and, among other things, wrote a book about Franz Kafka. He died suddenly on a lecture tour in Jena, November 2, 1956. His remains were brought to Prague.

VEREŠOVÁ, CHARLOTTE, was born on December 13, 1928, in Litoměřice, where she attended school. When she was fourteen years old she was deported from Prague to Terezín, where she lived in a *Jugendheim* or youth home. After the war she took a library course and then worked in a library. Today she does work as a technical designer.

V + W was a very popular symbol for the names

VOSKOVEC, JIŘÍ, and WERICH, JAN, who belong to the sixty-year-olds of today. Forty years ago they founded the "Voskovec and Werich Theatre" in Prague and were its leading artistic figures. Their dramatic career is closely associated with the "Liberated Theatre," as it came to be called. In a period of general disorientation in life and ideas, they brought to this ferment humor and laughter as a weapon against old forms of life. This pair of clowns—or you might say elegant Pierrot and a dadaist August, or a lyrical dreamer and wayward observer of reality—were distinguished for their original manner of speech, the explosive magic of their words, the poetic play of image. They defended the positive side of life, and were themselves intoxicated with life. Their direct freshness in observation and their militant wit brought psychological relief to a person's nerves. They were loved by students and by all those who were young in heart—without regard to physical age. That is why it was so dangerous when they came out against all forms of fascism, incompromisingly and keenly opposed, in the plays they composed themselves, at a time when fascism was on the ascent. It is also why they had to flee their country when the Nazis occupied it. They did not return until 1945.

Jan Werich came back for good. He works as author of theatrical, film and television scripts, and as actor in these fields. Socialist Czechoslovakia has awarded him the title of National Artist.

Jiří Voskovec returned to the United States, where he had lived as an emigré with Werich. He obtained American citizenship and works as an actor in theatre and film, known under the name of George Voskovec.

WEBEROVÁ, ILSE, was born January 11, 1903, in Vítkovice, near Ostrava. She married in Prague and wrote three juvenile books for her children, short stories and fairy stories that were later published. In 1942 she was deported to Terezín, with her husband and younger son. The elder son the Webers had managed to send, with the help of the Jewish Religious Communities, through England to Sweden, thus saving his life. The whole period she was in Terezín, Ilse Weberová worked as head nurse for children. Besides this, she composed poetry and music. On November 8, 1944, Ilse Weberová volunteered to accompany her husband and small son in a transport to Auschwitz, where she and her son died.

WEISS ARNOŠT, was born July 29, 1892, in Nové Mesto nad Váhom, studied in Vienna and worked in Olomouc as a civil engineer. He is married and has one son, a doctor of medicine. In 1942 he was deported with his family to Terezín, where he was head of the "Bauausführung." After liberation he returned to Prague and worked in the National Administration of the Jewish Council of Elders and in restoring Terezín structures in the Ministry of Social Welfare. Before the war he had been a founding member of the chamber-music society and still devotes his free time to chamber music.

WEISSOVÁ-HOŠKOVÁ, HELGA, was born in Prague in 1929. She was deported to Terezín December 12, 1941, and in October 1944 on to Auschwitz, Freiberg and Mauthausen. After liberation she completed her studies, devoted herself to painting and graphic art at the State School of Graphic Art and the Industrial Arts College, where she was the pupil of Professor Emil Filla and Alois Fišárek. She was married in 1954 and is the mother of two children. She continues to paint and still derives subjects from her experiences in the ghetto and concentration camps. In 1964 she had shows in Rome and Milan and in Czechoslovakia also her pictures often appear at exhibitions held by the Czechoslovak Union of Artists, of which she is a member.

ZELENKA, FRANTIŠEK, born Kutná Hora, 1904, was a most promising Czechoslovak architects of the stage. He fell victim to the Nazis in 1944; after having been interned two years in Terezín, he was included in a transport to Poland and on the way was tortured to death. His very last work was the designs for the stages in Terezín attics, where the internees performed plays, and then the designs for costumes for these plays. We can find traces of Zelenka's industry, cultivated and artistic imagination in the State Jewish Museum in Prague. Furthermore very convincing evidence of his high artistic level is to be found in the National and Municipal Theatres, as well as the former Liberated Theatre in Prague. In the theatres outside of Prague, such as Olomouc, he always worked with decisive and marked success—in the stage plays, opera, or ballet, for works of French poets or Molière or Shakespeare. He worked with the outstanding directors of his time. At first chiefly a witty composer of background for comedy, he evolved into a sensitive portrayer of humanity and dramatic conflict. He was a great lover of life and optimist, who had an elemental need for the society of friends, and who died prematurely in his forties, in artistic and human isolation. He was a merry person and a quite unique artistic type.

Dr. WEIL, JIŘÍ, was born in 1900 in the Czech village of Praskolesy. He studied literary history and Slavic literature at Prague's Charles University. He is the author of a number of works, the best known of which are the novels *Makanna—otec divů (*Makanna—Father of Miracles), *Harfeník* (The Harp-Player) and *Na střeše je Mendelssohn* (Mendelssohn is on the Roof), the last-named laid during the occupation. His *The Lambeth Walk is Danced Here* remained unfinished. He also translated many poems from the ghetto. During the occupation he was persecuted, not only as a Jew, but also for his political activity. With the aid of a Czech police official he escaped from prison, then "committed suicide" and went into underground work. His well-known novel *Život s hvězdou* (Life With a Star) was drawn from this period of his life. Until his death in 1959 he worked in the State Jewish Museum in Prague. If Jiří Weil had written nothing else but his *Elegy for the 77,297*, excerpts from which are printed on the jacket of our book, he would without doubt have won for himself a permanent place in Czech literature and in the history of the Jewish people.

BRIEF INFORMATION ON THE SS AND THE SD

The following ranks were in the Reich command of the SS: SS Obergruppenführer, Gruppenführer, Brigadeführer, Oberführer. These all corresponded to various ranks of general. The SS Standartenführer was equivalent to colonel, the Obersturmbannführer a lieutenant colonel, the Sturmbannführer a major, the Hauptsturmführer a captain, the Obersturmführer a first lieutenant and the Untersturmführer a second lieutenant. The SS ranks of Hauptscharführer, Oberscharführer, Scharführer and Unterscharführer corresponded to non-commissioned officer ranks. Lower-ranking SS-men could hold higher positions than higher SS ranks and the intelligence service (SD) was higher than the higher ranks of the SS.

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Jiří Stárek, head conductor of the Prague Radio Orchestra

Pavel Haas — Bohumil Mathesius
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(Inside back cover) Scene of Pinkas Synagogue—part of the 77,297 names of people tortured to death (photo)

EDITORIAL NOTE It is to be expected in a collective work that the authors, not knowing what the rest of the book's text is, write about things that others have partly covered in the same book. It would not be difficult for the editors to cross out this partial duplication and to arrange the contributions of the different authors so that each would keep strictly to his own theme. But we have not done so in any case, for we are of the opinion that every internee in Terezín experienced life in all its depth and breadth, that scarcely anyone was spared the worst, and therefore it would not be suitable to limit what each author wanted to say. We believe, also, that our endeavours will not be less effective for any imprecision of some authors. Not everyone had the opportunity of working with such exact figures as did Josef Polák, for example. His data are really eloquent. One of the leading Nazis defended himself in court by saying that six million Jews did not die in Auschwitz, but "only" about two million. Did he think that his guilt—if this assertion were true—would be the less? Or did he forget that not only do figures speak, but also documents? And those documents that prove that the Nazis were bent on annihilating not only the Jews, but also all Slavs and members of other peoples—these speak most eloquently and convincingly of what Nazism means.

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