

EN

CLASSMATES

THE LIVES OF JEWISH STUDENTS WHO ATTENDED OUR SCHOOL

"GYMNÁZIUM NA MIKULÁŠSÉM NÁMĚSTÍ V PLZNI"

Ilona Dvořáková
Kristýna Homolová
Jan Jáchim
Monika Stehlíková
Aleš Turnovec

Acknowledgements:

We thank these people and associations for their cooperation and support:

Michal Brummel, Kateřina Deimlová and Elon Deiml, Charlotte Epstein, Hanuš Lamač, Dagmar Lánská and Jitka Lánská, Mindy, Gary and Ben Loebner, Eva Nelson, Milan Plešák, Miroslav Bělohávek, Olga Benešová, Jiří Bloch, Jarmila Bryhcínová, Evžen Czinner, Miroslav Červenka, Bohumila Červenková, Josef Čipera, Václav Gruber, Pavel Hauk, Růžena Hrnáčková, Karel Kabát, Václav Kabát, Jarmila Kreysová, Zuzana Růžičková, Julie Žežulková, Hana Kumperová and Karel Kumpera, Mordechaj Livni, Tom Luke, Karel Matějka, Jiří Mladějovský, Eva and Jan Roček, Jan Ruml, Jaroslav Řežáb, Libor Říšský, Miroslav Štrunc, Zdeňek Thoř, Irena Hrdinová, Pavel Hudeček, Alice Zadražilová, People in Need, Terezín Memorial, Martina Sládková and Marie Zahradníková from the Education and Culture Centre of the Jewish Museum in Prague, Kateřina Svobodová from the Jewish Museum in Prague, Ms. Reichentálová from the Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic, Embassy of the Czech Republic in Washington, D.C., Embassy of the Czech Republic in Santiago de Chile, Radovan Kodera from the National Heritage Office in Plzeň, Marta Vančurová from The Forgotten Ones and Václav Havel.

The issue of this book was supported financially by:

Foundation for Holocaust Victims

The City of Plzeň

The Plzeň Region

Foundation of Cultural Activities of the Plzeň Citizens

© Ilona Dvořáková, Kristýna Homolová, Jan Jáchim, Monika Stehlíková, Aleš Turnovec, 2005

Translation: Aleš Turnovec, corrected by Alice Zadražilová

Design by Martina Horáková (Bílý slon) and Jan Jáchim

Published by "Gymnázium na Mikulášském náměstí v Plzni" and "Humr" civic association 2005

This book is the outcome of the search for the students who attended our grammar school at the end of the 1930s and who were persecuted for their Jewish origin on the basis of the so called Nuremberg Laws.

At that time this school was officially called “II. československá státní reálka”. The language of instruction was always Czech although the school was founded in 1906, in the era of the Austrian Monarchy.

During the period of “the first republic” (from the birth of Czechoslovakia in 1918 till the signing of the Munich Agreement in October 1938) it was attended by students from Plzeň and its surroundings, but there were several foreigners as well. Most of the students professed a Catholic faith, some Evangelist or Orthodox; some weren't members of any church. And there were also some Jews. At the end of the thirties there were eight Jewish students and a few others were additionally labelled as “Jews” or “Jewish half-bloods” by the Nazis.

Anti-Semitism was quite latent during the period of “the first republic” and Czech anti-Semites stayed silent till October 1938. After the signing of the Munich Agreement president Edvard Beneš left the country and the Czech nationalistic and anti-Semitic right wing came into power. The first anti-Jewish discriminatory regulations on the Czechoslovak territory were issued by the Czechoslovak government in February 1939 – Jews were banned from working in state control. The press contained inflammatory anti-Semitic articles. Slovakia broke off after the Nazi occupation on March 16th, 1939 and the occupied land was attached to The German Reich and renamed “Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia”.

After the arrival of the Nazis the same anti-Jewish regulations and restrictions as the already valid in Germany and Austria were enforced in the Protectorate. Jewish children had to leave schools of all levels and a great number of bans was issued. All of that finally lead the Czech Jews to social isolation and made them destitute. At the end of the year 1941 a large ghetto was founded in the former garrison town of Terezín where Jews from the Protectorate and other countries, e.g. Germany and Austria, were concentrated. Later they were transported from there to the East, to concentration and extermination camps.

Five former students of our grammar school were murdered, the others survived thanks to good luck, help or coincidence. But their families mostly did not.

This book was made to keep their memory alive.

Emil Ehrlich (died in Auschwitz)

Jiří Stein (died in Raasiku)

Eva Brummelová (emigrated to Great Britan)

Hana Fantová (died most probably in Izbica)

Mirko Lauterstein (was imprisoned in Postoloprty)

Egon Löbner (survived Auschwitz and was liberated in Flossenbürg)

Hana Porgesová (died most probably in Sobibor)

Arnošt Epstein (was imprisoned in Postoloprty)

Hanuš Deiml (survived Auschwitz and was liberated in Altenburg)

Jiří Schanzer (died in a concentration camp, most probably in Auschwitz)

II. československá státní reálka v Plzni (its building, its professors and their caricature by Bohumil Konečný, graduate in 1935/36)

blue pages 29, 35 etc.

lists of students by their classes (yearbook of the school year 1937/38)

Extermination of the Plzeň Jews (Radovan Kodera)

p. 26-28

transports of Plzeň Jews (January 1942)

More than sixty years ago an unprecedented event happened in Plzeň. Within ten days between 17th and 26th January 1942 at least two thousand of Plzeň citizens of all social classes and professions (from workers, craftsmen, tradesmen, teachers to physicians, lawyers, bankers and officials) divided into three large groups were deported from the town. This affected the whole families, including old people and even very small children. The only thing that made each of them apparently different from the other inhabitants was a six-pointed yellow star in size of a palm sewn on the left side of the coat.

These people were labelled as “Jews” on the basis of genealogical origin and Nazi criteria without any consideration of their own national or denominational feeling. According to the so called “Nuremberg Laws”, since 1935 valid in the region of the German Reich and after the German occupation of the rests of Czechoslovakia also in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, they were gradually deprived of their civil rights and liberties, their social status, property and employment, they were treated like people legally and humanly inferior and they were exposed to graduating administrative, psychological and physical repression. This forced transfer was just another phase of a horrific process which was euphemistically called by its Nazi authors “The Final Solution of the Jewish Question”.

The destination of the three special trains which left the Plzeň railway station on January 17th, 22nd and 26th, was the town of Terezín. In autumn 1941 this town was chosen by Reinhard Heydrich as a place of concentration of all the Jewish people from the protectorate territory. Together with the citizens of Plzeň there were also other 540 Jews – men, women and children – from nearby areas – the districts of Rokycany, Kralovice, Radnice, Zbiroh, Blovice, Manětín and Hořovice. Among all the trains heading for Terezín from the protectorate and later from other European cities taken by Germans, these three transports from Plzeň were one of the earliest ones.

Before the deportation took place all its participants were interned in the Sokol building in Štruncovy Sady for several days. Hundreds of people, men, women and children, spent days and nights together in the main hall and in the adjacent rooms. They slept on straw mattresses on the ground, cramping for space and treading on each other. When the train departure was scheduled armed units of the German occupation army escorted them in columns of four as prisoners. Each of them had to wear a label with the name and the transport number. The same marking was also used to label the luggage – suitcases and backpacks – which contained all their remaining property – warm clothing, a few personal things and food for several days. No one could carry more than fifty kilograms.

After many hours of the journey the train finally arrived in the Bohušovice railway station about two and a half kilometers far from Terezín. Then they walked the distance carrying their luggage and being accompanied by Czech gendarmes. Some old or sick people were transported on trucks. When they came to Terezín, the family members were separated – the town didn't become the “open ghetto” yet and there were just some abandoned barracks serving as places of accommodation. There were different sections chosen for men able to work, for women with children younger than twelve years, for old and sick people. But the capacity was not adequate; people had to sleep on straw on the ground and were

troubled with sanitary conditions and standard of the meals. These barracks became prisons for its new “lodgers” – they were watched over by gendarmes, with no freedom of movement. This changed on June 27th, 1942 when the eviction of the civilian population was finished and the gendarmes under the SS command were withdrawn from the barracks to guard the city walls and the gateways. The transports from Plzeň were marked with letters “R”, “S” and “T”. They deported 2064 people right from Plzeň and 540 from its surrounding districts. The oldest person was Marie Ebenová from Litohlavy in the “T” transport. She died four days after her arrival in Terezín. By the end of January other 21 people of old age perished; eighty-year-old Luisa Schwarzová from Plzeň coming in the second transport died as early as on January 23rd. The youngest transported person was eight-month-old Eva Fischerová (the “T” transport). She survived in Terezín with her mother.

As early as on March 11th and 18th, 1942 two transports marked “Aa” and “Ab”, each containing 1000 people, were sent from Terezín to the Izbica ghetto. They carried 620 men, women and children from the Plzeň region.

Izbica is located in the district of Lublin in the eastern Poland – the Nazi establishment called this area “General Gouvernement”. In 1940 a ghetto for local and neighbouring Polish Jews was founded there. Other similar ghettos were set up in many cities and towns with rather large Jewish community. A ghetto was usually enclosed with a wooden fence with a barbed wire, had several entranceways and was guarded by SS units or Ukrainian guards. Jews interned there were used for slave labour in agriculture or nearby industrial complexes. Their already inhumane living conditions were getting worse and worse as the situation on the eastern front was changing.

During the first six months of 1942 fourteen transports of Czech Jews arrived in ghettos and concentration camps in the Lublin district – fourteen thousand men, women and children, those who had been concentrated to Terezín from the territory of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. In these transports there were 1320 people coming from the Plzeň region, i.e. more than a half. The following transports to General Gouvernement departed from Germany and some other countries controlled by the Nazis.

During the next eight months other people from Plzeň were deported from Terezín to ghettos, concentration camps and extermination camps in eastern Poland, Belorussia, Estonia and Latvia. On October 26th, 1942 the first transport to Auschwitz left Terezín; the “KL Auschwitz II – Birkenau” camp became the destination of all later transports leaving Terezín.

Two hundred and eight people transported to Terezín from the Plzeň region died in Terezín during the year 1942 (and until the liberation in May 1945 other seventy-one). By the end of the year 1942 almost all deportees to the East died under extra horrific circumstances in ghettos and extermination camps. In December 1942, eleven months since the Jewish inhabitants left Plzeň to build “the town donated to Jews by the Führer”, not even one third of the deportees was alive; more than one thousand eight hundred men, women and children were dead. Other people died during the next years at various places, mostly in Auschwitz. Considering the number of more than two thousand people deported from Plzeň to Terezín in 1942, only two hundred and four of them survived till the end of the war.

p. 93

The Monument of the Plzeň Holocaust Victims - **The Garden of Memories** was created in 2002 thanks to Radovan Kodera. During one week, the Plzeň inhabitants and students wrote more than 2600 names of the citizens murdered during the Holocaust. The monument is situated in the old building of the Jewish school next to the Old Synagogue in Plzeň.

Emil Ehrlich

(24th December 1923 Plzeň - ? 18th May 1944 Auschwitz)

His father Josef and mother Hermína owned and ran two linen shops. One of them held its lucrative position near the square on the corner of Sedláčkova Street (now the seat of The Cultural Preservation Office) and the other was on Klatovská Street not far from their home placed at 5 Bendova Street. The apartment house where they lived was right opposite the residence of the Plzeň Gestapo commander. Since the address corresponded to the city centre and therefore to the area where the Jewish inhabitants were resettled at the beginning of the 1940s, the family stayed there till January 1942. For several previous months the abandoned balcony, situated to the inner yard, served as a place where Emil could shoot off his air rifle.

He was quiet and unostentatious and had neither many friends nor enemies. His classmates quite liked him and saw him as a shy, physically weak, but still persistent boy.

As one of the smallest students in the class Emil used to sit at the first desk in the middle row next to Karel Matějka. Emil was often absent and Karel gave him extra lessons of French. But he had excellent results in all the other subjects and in a way even in physical education. He used to be the leader of the row during the roll calls, which gave his stronger classmates a reason to admire him.

As a boy Emil suffered from a variety of chronic diseases. He tried to cure the eczema on his hands and neck, but with a little effect. He had a chronic head cold and probably also asthma. That is why his worried parents occasionally used to accompany him on his way to school; they were not only interested in his school results, but also in his proper and neat clothing. His knee breeches, striped sweater and short jacket used to be supplemented with treacherous knee socks that kept sliding down and made people laugh.

Eyewitnesses can lively remember how Emil was excluded from school. It happened at around the beginning of the school year 1939/1940 when there was no other Jewish student at school (except Arnošt and Charlotte Epstein whose father converted to Christianity). Emil was just entering the fifth grade. In the preceding year, when the war broke out, many students started to leave the school, so that the number of people in classes was changing quickly. That's why Emil could have easily disappeared without any notice. But he didn't, because something very alarming happened. The school was visited by Gestapo. Some men standing in the door made Emil pack his things and leave the school forever, all with formal help of principal Pleva and the class teacher Antonín Hecht. For quite a long time this scene became the main subject of the students' excited chatting.

After that Emil worked as a labourer. His father kept on manufacturing quilts although his shop was confiscated and he could only do menial work. The mother stayed at home. On the January 26th, 1942 all three of them were included in the transports to Terezín (T115, T116 and T117) and on May 18th, 1944 deported to Auschwitz in the "Eb" transport. This date is the last trace found about the Ehrlich family. The "Eb" transport carried 1062 men and boys, 1437 women and girls. They were placed into the B II b sector, so called "Terezín Family Camp". In June a number of people was selected from this group to be

p. 32

**Karel Matějka
at the meeting
of Emil's former
class in 2004**

shifted to other camps and during the night from 11th to 12th July 1944 most of the remaining prisoners (about 4000 people) were murdered in gas chambers.

The Terezín Family Camp in Auschwitz-Birkenau

On September 6th, 1943 two transports (D1 with 2479 people and Dm with 2588 people) left Terezín. Their destination was Birkenau, in particular the newly created “Terezín Family Camp”, a section in the camp language called “BIlb”. Considering the camp routine the deportees got a very unusual welcome: they did not go through the standard selection, their hair wasn't cut, they were allowed to meet other family members (living in different barracks but in the same section) and the children had their own special children block where they could play together and where they were secretly taught by their instructors. Their games were sometimes observed even by SS-members, including Dr. Josef Mengele. In all other ways the living conditions were as cruel as in the rest of Birkenau – prisoners suffered from hunger, cold, exhaustion from hard physical work, diseases and dreadful sanitary conditions. The Auschwitz underground movement found out that in the BIlb inhabitants' documents there was a note “SB” (Sonderbehandlung – special treatment). This was a term used for people destined for extermination.

On the 15th and 18th December two other transports were sent from Terezín to the “family camp”. They carried five thousand prisoners. On the March 8th, 1944 almost 5000 prisoners from the September transports were separated from the others and in the following night they were murdered in gas chambers.

Three more transports heading for this “family camp” and carrying 7500 people left Terezín on the 15th, 16th and 18th May 1944. The prisoners from the December and May transports went through selections and therefore some of them got out of Birkenau to other concentration camps. At the beginning of July there were still more than six thousand people remaining in BIlb. All of them were murdered by gas between the 10th and 12th July 1944.

Out of the 17500 prisoners of the “Terezín Family Camp” only 1274 survived to the end of the war. Neither Emil Ehrlich's nor Eva Brummelová's family were among them.

Jiří Stein

(16th January 1923 Plzeň – ? 1st September 1942 Raasiku)

Jiří was born on January 16th, 1923. His father Otto was from Horní Sekyřany (born on July 24th, 1890) and his mother Hedvika from Louny (born on August 13th, 1893, neé Hellerová). They got married in February 1922 in Teplice. Jiří had a sister called Hana (born on November 7th, 1926). The family lived at 20 Husova Street and owned a clothes shop.

Jiří started to attend grammar school in September 1934 but he is remembered by students from lower grades:

“When I was at the first grade, Jiří attended the 2nd C grade, where the class-teacher was

Julius Lenk. Stein had to repeat the third grade and got to my class. Our class-teacher was Antonín Hecht. It was the school year 1938/1939," Mr Zdeněk Thoř says.

Repeating the third grade Jiří got to the class where Emil Ehrlich was. They are both remembered by Mr Říšský and Mr Červenka in their letter where they write the following about Jiří:

"He was medium build and a real merchant. He used to bring a supply of quarto paper to art lessons and sell it with a small profit. Our relationship was friendly but I do not remember him having any close friends. Stein was a member of a boy scout group called 'Stopa' (means 'a footprint' or 'a trace')."

He left school at the beginning of the school year 1938/1939 and became a labourer (as Emil did). His father had a similar job before being transported to Terezín, the mother and sister Hana were maids.

On January 22nd, 1942 Jiří, Hana and their parents were transported to Terezín. On September 1st, 1942 they were deported to Estonian Raasiku with the "Be" transport. About 200 young people from this transport were selected for work – whether Jiří or his sister Hana were among them is still unknown.

The "Be" Transport to Estonia

(Lukáš Příbyl)

On Tuesday morning on September 1st, 1942, one thousand Jews were led from Terezín to Bohušovice train station where a train had already been prepared for them. They had their luggage of maximum weight of 50 kilograms on small carts and their numbers hanging on their necks. Old and sick people were transported to the station on vans. The next morning the train was far behind Dresden and the next route led through Posen, Bromberg, Marienburg and Tilsit. The deportees did not suffer from hunger – they had some bread and cans from Terezín and they also got some water when the train stopped several times. But it was too hot in the wagons, there was too little room and the people's legs got swollen. The train arrived in Riga on the fourth day after its departure, but several hours later it moved again. A rumour spread quickly: Riga ghetto was full and the involuntary passengers of the train were rejected by the local authorities. The following route led through thick northern forests and small railroad stations with unpronounceable names. In the morning of the 5th September the train arrived in the Raasiku station, the wagon doors opened and people began to get off the train. They were awaited by Estonian SD members and a few German SD and SS men.

When the Czech Jews were stretching their legs after the long journey, none of them could have had any idea that in a few hours four fifths of them would be murdered.

The Czech deportees were sorted immediately by a group of officers. The strong and young ones were sent to one side, children and old people to buses on the other side. The Jews calmed down a little when they saw such modern blue buses with shining chromium-plating and some of them also suggested that the situation was not so desperate. Soon there was a crowd because everyone wanted to sit down. The young were told to get the luggage off the train and load it onto trucks. People unwilling to be separated from each other were assured that they would meet again

in the camp. The young ones were told to leave the seats to old people and children, to help load the luggage and then to depart on the trucks. When a truck was loaded the guards chose several girls to get on and to leave with the luggage. Young men stayed in Raasiku until all girls and women had left. All the time the old people and children were boarding the busses. The vehicles always left and after a while they returned for other groups of Jews. No one had a slightest idea that the blue buses meant death and that the people leaving would never be seen again.

One of those who were in command of the massacre testified: *“Everything was prepared for shooting in Kalevi Liiva. The pit had already been dug and the firing squad with submachine-guns was waiting in there. Three Estonians and three Germans stayed by the bus and ordered the prisoners to get off and undress. Most of the shooters had batons in their hands and beat the prisoners who were undressing too slowly or unwillingly. As they were passing by me on their way to the ditch I was taking their earrings, rings and watches off. Some gunfire sounded from the pit and was followed by a heartbreaking scream and moaning. The prisoners who were getting undressed at the bus began to worry and those who already passed around me refused to go into the ditch. So they were beaten up with the batons. Then the screaming stopped and everything proceeded normally. Only a shout to rush the prisoners could be heard: schneller, schneller, schneller!”*

It turned up later that the horrible scream was caused by two members of the execution squad because they started to pull out prisoners’ teeth with pliers before killing them. The shooting took the whole day with short pauses between the arrivals of prisoners. During these breaks vodka was being drunk and pastry was being eaten.”

Later this incident with teeth was investigated officially because such behaviour could have affected the “peaceful “ process of murdering.

The possible wave of the wardens’ compassion was prevented by litres of vodka and the victims’ gold. During the execution of the first transport there was no attempt to escape. While the passengers of the blue busses were dying in Kalevi Liiva two hundred young people with their luggage were going on trucks through beautiful northern countryside on their way to a camp in Jägal several kilometres far. Fewer than fifty people from the Be transport survived the war.

Eva Brummelová

(15th July 1923 Plzeň)

Eva Anna was born on July 15th, 1923. She was the first daughter of Leo Brummel (born on March 10th, 1890) and Gertruda (born on September 22nd, 1899, neé Liebsteinová). On March 14th, 1926 their second daughter was born - Eliška Sofie Karolína, usually called Lilly. They lived at 100 Klatovská Street (today 140) and their nanny called Beta lived with them. The father was one of the owners of Brummel, Bloch & Waldstein tannery located at the corner of Kalkova Street and Přemyslova Street.

The Brummel family came from Nová Ves. Grandfather Mořic got trained in tanning in Kožlany and moved to Klatovy where the family lived till 1905. Father Leo graduated from the grammar school in Klatovy. During WWI he was captu-

p. 41

the Brummel family (Gertruda, Eva, Lilka, Leo (at the bottom) and aunt Markéta from Klatovy with the girls (at the top))

p. 40

Brummel, Bloch and Waldstejn tannery

red in Russia and when he got back he took over the tannery in Plzeň. After the company was closed during the depression he worked in Sušice.

Leo and his brother Jan married Liebstein sisters – Gertruda and Jana (Jan and Jana Brummel returned from Auschwitz). Markéta Brummelová (Leo's sister who married Leo Eisenschiml) died in Birkenau.

They always spoke Czech; only during the joint meals the parents demanded German to be practised. Eva was supposed to improve her German at school – the primary school for girls at Chodské Square. Besides that she sometimes practised French conversation with her mother. In 1934 she entered the grammar school (II. československá státní reálka) where she smoothly adapted to lessons in Czech. Among her classmates she was considered to be “a very talented student with remarkable knowledge who was often presented as a paragon by teachers but remained very modest” (the words of Václav Gruber, one of the classmates). But after finishing the fourth grade she changed to business school at Petákovo Square. In July 1939 she left for Great Britain in one of the Nicolas Winton's transports.

Jarmila Bartůňková-Krejzová remembers:

“We were saving money for a party at their place. Their parents were often gone and in the evenings Eva and Lilly were usually alone at home. Their cook made a cake for us.

I taught Eva and other girls how to dance when the boys had lessons of physical education. I can still remember the melody... Eva's aunt had a house in Husova Street with a flat roof and we used to sunbathe there. And this aunt of hers had a plenty of records.

The last six months before her departure to Britain she studied at a business school and she privately learned English. She was probably preparing to leave. Her father stayed in Plzeň quite long. I used to see him removing snow at the railway station. Lilly had a friend called Honzina. She was a poor girl and the Brummels always supported her a lot. Then, when they were banned from entering shops she was doing their shopping.”

Eva's parents had been weighing up the opportunity of their children's emigration for a long time. Finally they let the decision up to them. Eva didn't hesitate to leave, Lilly did not want to go away and in fact her mother was glad that at least one of her daughters would stay.

Eva came to England and was adopted by the Pamment family. When the World War II broke out the Pamments moved to the country and sent Eva to an old aunt living nearby. Eva had no possibility of further education. Therefore her parents' friends (Mr. and Mrs. Otte who had moved to England before) took her to their place in Birmingham. It was still in 1939. She took external courses at a London university till 1941. Besides that she learned English shorthand and typewriting. Later she moved to Bristol where she could work in a hospital laboratory.

In the meanwhile Eva's parents and sister were moved to a smaller flat in Veleslavínova Street. Lilly kept in contact with her friends – for example Zuzana Růžičková and Hana Fischerová who returned from concentration camps after the war or Hana Fantová who died in Raasiku. They used to meet at the pond called Židovák that was appropriated for Jews. In the photograph the one next to Lilly (on the very left) is František Příbyl (a son of the curator of the Plzeň Museum), on his back there is little Viktor (Viky) Stein who died in Auschwitz. In the other picture from the left there are Erich Ordner and Hanzi Benischová who

p. 42

Eva shortly before she left for England

p. 46

at the top:

Eva (England, 1945)

at the bottom:

Lilka (in the photo taken in Plzeň by Karel Kumpera)

wanted to get married after the war and Lilka Penížková; in the upper row there are Karel Kumpera and Marie (Mimka) Ehrlichová; on the edge Polda Weisskopf side face and again František Příbyl lying. Hanzi Benischová and Lilka Penížková were included in a transport to Auschwitz after their return to Terezín from Křivoklát where they worked in a forest. Erich Ordner joined them voluntarily and they all died there in September 1943.

Karel Kumpera and his friends of the same views led a private war against the German invaders. Later he said that he had only been doing what he had considered to be right. He socialized with Jewish youth (including Lilly) at homes of Jewish people protected by their marriage with Aryans – at Marty Rappová's place (her parents owned a delicatessen shop opposite the theatre) or at Františka Kubičková's place in Sedláčkova Street. Mrs. Kubičková got a postcard sent by Truda (Gertruda Brummelová) on September 7th, 1943 after her arrival to Auschwitz. At Mrs. Rappová's place there were food parcels stored. They could be sent to particular people in Terezín just from one post office in Plzeň where it was allowed.

“Mr. Brummel used to go to bed at nine o'clock. Then we were reading in the next room. They had double beds there; Lilly and her mother were lying there, I was lying between them and reading them a book. Those were fantastic days.

Mr. Brummel was a sociable man; he was always jolly and we always had a lot of fun with him.”

The Brummels were not summoned to any of the Plzeň transports. They were transported from Prague to Terezín in July 1943. Lilly and her aunt Jana were sent to work as loggers in Křivoklátsko. Those days Karel Kumpera and his friends camped out not far from them so they could meet secretly and even hand over packages with food.

Leo, Gertruda and Lilka were transported to the Terezín Family Camp in Auschwitz on September 6th, 1943. Six months later Leo Brummel met Hana Sachslová-Kumperová's mother and gave her some advise how to behave in Auschwitz. Lilka, Gertruda and Leo were murdered during the mass liquidation of the Terezín Family Camp on March 8th, 1944.

After the end of the war the remaining relatives tried to convince Eva to get back and study medicine that she was interested in during her stay in England. She came home in summer 1947 and then she came to her uncle Jan's funeral in 1960. After the war they were worried that British authorities would not allow her to get back and after 1948 there was a danger that Czechoslovak authorities wouldn't allow her to leave (although she already had a British citizenship). In the post-war period she kept in contact with her relatives in Plzeň and since 1970 she used to visit Czechoslovakia regularly. As for her classmates, she was in contact with Šárka Černá and Egon Löbner.

In 1955 Eva married Michael Brian Nelson from Bristol. Their older daughter Susan (born on June 11th, 1955) also lives in Bristol, Gillian (born on November 19th, 1959) settled down in Sean Worthing in western Texas. Eva has four grandchildren: Chloe (11), Adam (15), Kiera (16) and Richard (18).

Lilka with her friends on the bank of the Židovák pond

top: L i l k a Brummelová sitting on the left, the boy next to her is Viktor „Viki“ Stein (who died in Majdanek), the lying young man: František Příbyl.

center: F r a n t i š e k Příbyl lying, Polda Weiss from the side. In the middle there are Erich Ordner with his girlfriend Hanzi Benischová and Lilka Penížková (all of them perished in Auschwitz). Karel Kumpera and Marie Ehrlichová are in the second plan.

Mrs. Eva with her husband Michael Brian Nelson

Nicholas Winton's "Kindertransports"

During the Christmas 1938 a twenty-nine-year-old Briton Nicolas Winton arrived in Prague. Originally he headed for Switzerland, but his friend Martin Blake persuaded him to come to Czechoslovakia. Martin was a delegate of the British committee for refugees and organized escapes of Nazi-threatened adults. Winton tried to find a way to take Jewish children to a safe place. He was acting on his own so he had to overcome many bureaucratic obstacles. He was hunting for visas, medical certificates and most of all for people willing to take care of these children. He managed to send transports to Sweden and mainly to Britain. But the last train with 250 children couldn't leave – it was the 1st of September 1939 and the World War II broke out. Nicolas Winton saved 664 children's lives thanks to his astonishing personal zeal.

Hana Fantová

(18th November 1923 – ? 19th March 1942 Izbica)

During the war the town of Izbica lying in the eastern Poland was a desperately overcrowded gathering point for Jews from the nearest neighbourhood and later even from abroad. It served as a transit station – a place where its visitors had to wait for their transport to extermination camps in Bełżec, Sobibor and Chelmno. On March 17th, 1942 a transport marked "Ab" heading right for the transit ghetto Izbica left Terezín. One of the wagons carried Hana Fantová with her parents and a grandmother.

Hana's father grew up in Horní Ročov where he doesn't have any record in the registry office "because of irresponsible officiating of the Hříškov rabbi". Working as a shop assistant he used to stay mostly in Jablonec nad Nisou or Pardubice until he finally got to southern Bohemia where he probably met his future wife Regina Glaserová from Čivice u Plané. They settled in Plzeň and got married in 1923 – the rabbi was Prof. Dr. Golinski and Leo Löwidt and Oskar Sonnenschein (both perished) were the witnesses. Nine months later their daughter Hana was born. During the second and third years of her life she had a nanny – a Catholic widow called Marie Balická. The father was taking care of the business and the mother was the official owner of their sewing shop.

When she finished the first grade of her grammar school studies she changed schools and came to "II. československá státní reálka" – it was the year 1935. For some years she was free of paying the school fees. On Saturdays she was allowed to attend the synagogue instead of school. According to her classmates' words she was one of the quickest students although the school report from the fourth grade shows weak results in Czech Language and Technical Drawing. She left the school in the mid-term of the fifth grade when other students defined as Jews had already left.

She used to share the desk with Jarmila Lodlová from Týmákov who remained a close friend of hers in the following years although the number of restrictions was growing. Hana seemed to be a modest but also cheerful and sociable girl. She was discreet but essential (she took part in a postgraduate reunion in Týmákov – the pub where it took place belonged to Jarmila's parents). In spite of

the variety of prohibitions Hana attended a dancing course and she can be seen on a group photograph taken on the stairs next to the hall entrance. Jarmila used to sleep at Hana's place after the course when unable to get to Tymákov. Hana also sewed the festive graduation dress for her.

As the process of excluding the Jews from the society continued the family lost their shop and had to move from their tenement house in Saská Street to a smaller flat at 6 Kramářovy Sady which they shared with at least two other families. Mr. Fanta experienced a Gestapo interrogation in January 1942. Three days before the transport he came home battered. Jarmila was just visiting Hana and this was the last time she saw them. On January 22nd, 1942 the family left in the transport marked "S" for the Terezín ghetto and a few weeks later, on March 17th, 1942, all of them were included into Ab transport heading for Izbica in the Lublin district.

Mrs. Lodlová (today Brichcínová) remembers:

"She had typically Jewish hair – black and curly. She was banned from going out, only in winter she used to go ice skating. She was cheerful and sociable. She was a good girl. She had to wear the star. I kept walking out with her and we used to ride a bicycle to the pond called Židovák. I thought that nothing could happen to me. No one ever checked us. Mr. Fanta used to tell me not to keep meeting them but I didn't care. They lost everything. When I knew them, they only had one small shop in Poděbradova Street where they repaired shirts. They were banned from working, they had nothing to live by. That was a catastrophe, there were for example three families living in one flat. Her father was arrested before the transport and beaten up. I visited them that day; they were living behind the theatre. Mr. Fanta told me about the interrogation. He sent everybody out and told me they were not coming back, he had been treated so horrible there that he knew they would not survive. But I had to keep it as a secret so that the rest could have some hope. And then – two or three days later they had to leave. There was nothing we could do, no way to help them.

I sent her several packages to Izbica. I know we could send a quarter of a kilogram. I made them caramel to give them some sugar. They sent one postcard only, one of those saying: "We are fine"."

Between 13th March and 15th June 1942 nineteen transports arrived in Izbica from abroad and brought 18395 prisoners. Hana's family arrived with the second transport from the protectorate. That was before the resettlement of the local Polish Jews. Right in the ghetto more than three thousand people died due to bad sanitary and housing conditions and a lack of food. The information available doesn't say anything about the further fate of the family. If they didn't perish in the ghetto they must have been murdered in one of the nearby extermination camps – Bežec or Sobibor.

Izbica

The small town of Izbica is situated about 20 kilometers to the north of Zamošć by the road leading to Lublin. Till the World War II, Jews were the majority of its population, today there aren't any. By the spring in 1943 all of them perished partly in gas chambers in Bežec or Sobibor, partly they were gunned down either right in the local ghetto or on the edge of mass graves they had to dig themselves at the Jewish cemetery. The same doom awaited also the Czech Jews who arrived from Terezín in the early spring of 1942.

There are hundreds of Czech Jews buried at the Jewish cemetery in

p. 51

a photo from the dancing course (Hana, Šárka Černá to the left from her and Jarmila Lodlová to the right)
in Jarmila Lodlová's garden (from the left: Šárka Černá, Hana Fantová, Jarmila Lodlová)
on the bank of the Židovák pond (Hana sitting on the left, the girl beside her is Hana Weinerová)

p. 52

an article from a journal of that time (The Friends of Jews Are The Same Enemies Of The Nation as the Jews)
a meeting of Hana's former class (Tymákov 1941) In the photo at the top of the page: Eva is pushing her bicycle accompanied by Jarmila Lodlová and Bohumila Wildmannová; the man with a hat on his head is J. Devetter, the class teacher, next to him teachers Tríska, Bláha and Turč are marching, followed by teacher Frýsl.

Izbica. And among them there is also a large number of men, women and children deported from Plzeň and its neighbourhood in three transports in January 1942.

Bełżec

The Bełżec extermination camp was founded in November 1941. The camp was divided into two parts: one for the service staff made of prisoners chosen from arriving transports and the other one for murdering itself. First there were three gas chambers where the exhaust fumes from diesel engines were used. The exterminatory process was started up fully on March 17th, 1942. The camp security guard consisted of about thirty SS members and about one hundred Ukrainian warders.

This is a description given by Karl Alfred Schluch, an SS member who spent 16 months in Bełżec: *"The transport clearance was carried out by a work commando led by a capo. They were supervised by two or three Germans from the camp garrison. During the procedure we told the Jews that they had come there for redistribution, but first that they were going to have a bath and be disinfected. Right after that they were led to the changing room. There was one for men and another one for women and children. When they left the changing room I took them straight to the gas chamber. I believe I made their way easier – I had to use such words and expressions that convinced them they were really going to have a bath. The Jews entered the chamber; the Ukrainians locked the door properly. Then the gassing engine was started up. A few minutes later (five or seven I guess) someone looked inside through the eyelet to make sure that everybody was dead. After that the rear door was opened and fresh air was let in. When the chamber was aired the commando led by its capo began to drag the bodies out. The Jews were very closely packed in there. Therefore they weren't lying on the ground but they were intertwined. Several or more bodies were dirty with excrements and urine; others were partly covered with vomit. I could see a blue tinge on their lips and tips of their noses. Someone's eyes were closed, someone's glazed. The bodies were pulled out of the chamber and searched by "a dentist" who cleared them of gold teeth and rings. All these things were thrown into a carton. Then the corpses were dug into mass graves."*

In December 1942 and during the year 1943 the graves were reopened and the bodies exhumed and burned. After that the camp was disassembled and about six hundred Jews who were still alive were sent to Sobibor. The Nazis transformed the area to a farm and passed it on to one of the Ukrainian warders.

In total six hundred thousand people were murdered in Bełżec.

Mirko Lauterstein

(24th July 1923 Plzeň – 1996 Plzeň)

Mirko was born on July 24th, 1923. He had a younger sister called Helena. The family lived at 30 Jungmannova Street together with Mirko's grandfather (mother's father) who they cared for. The father was a business representative of a company called Stolwerck.

Mirko went to the same class as Eva Brummelová, Hana Fantová, Hana Porgesová and Egon Löbner – that means that he began studying in 1934.

His former classmate Václav Gruber says:

"For a period of time he was my school desk neighbour. We used to nickname him 'Mirko Lauterstein always stein'. They lived at 21 Havlíčkova Street. His father was a business representative (probably a Jew – it was a mixed marriage). I visited him for a few times because of studying. He liked riding a bicycle – he had a racing one with a gear control which was unusual at that time – so he came to our place in Zbůch several times to enjoy cycling. After the war, probably at the beginning of June 1945 I came to visit him but the label on the doorbell was missing and a man told me that they had 'moved' during the war. I still don't understand it clearly because someone told me later that he had seen Mirko with a star of David on his coat."

Mirko could finish his studies and graduate in 1941. After that he worked in a paper-mill in Třemošná and then till 1944 as a worker in the Škoda factory.

His father was called to slave labour and deported with "AE 1" transport from Prague to Terezín. He was liberated there at the end of the war.

Jarmila Bartůňková, his former classmate says: *"I met him after the war – he was with his daughter at Sokol II where people often used to go. I didn't talk with him but I recognized him because he hadn't changed at all. There I found out that his name was no longer Lauterstein."*

Mirko changed his name to Lánský after the war and became a member of the Association of Fighters for Freedom. He got married in 1949 and had three children. His wife Dagmar Lánská says:

"We met for the first time during his compulsory military service when he had to serve in Cheb as an officer-cadet. He was in Pilsen hospital instead because of the veins on his legs. Then they allowed him to work in an office because he could use a typewriter – he was an excellent pupil; he had very good marks at school. He wanted to go to university but then they all were closed..."

When the end of the war was approaching he was in a concentration camp as well. The camp was called Postoloprty and he varnished locomotives there. He managed to escape. I didn't even tell my children that he was Jewish. They found it out from a school report when they were looking for his marks. I didn't want to trouble their minds with that. When we were getting married my relatives reproached me for his Jewish origin.

We needed to be active somewhere not to provoke the communists. That's why my husband joined a tourist association and I was in a youth association. Because of this we travelled through some of the neighbouring countries. Our youngest son left for Germany and that was another thing communists hated."

Mirko Lánský died after a long-lasting illness in 1966.

p. 57

an extract from the Jewish Public Register that protected Mirko and his sister Helena (both considered as Semi-Jews by the Nuremberg Laws) from the transport to Terezín. Before the end of the war, Mirko was imprisoned in Postoloprty.

p. 58

wedding in 1949: Mirko with his wife and his parents.

Egon Löbner

(24th February 1924 Plzeň – 30th December 1989 Palo Alto, California)

The following text includes parts of the memories Egon wrote himself:

"He was open and jolly, he knew how to laugh. He liked to recite – always with such zest! Once he was called forth by Professor Devetter to recite a poem called 'A Tempest'. Egon was holding the book and as he was saying 'Let the boat of his run as a fox over the heavy waves...' his hand suggested the movement of the boat. We were rolling on tables laughing." That's how Mrs. Jarmila Krejzová (now J. Bartůňková) talks about her former classmate Egon Löbner who was from the family of a prominent importer of exotic food and other rare commodities. This family lived in a house called "U Srdce" on the Republic Square and later moved to newly built villa at 50 Schwarzcova Street. The father's name was Emil and he was born on April 26th, 1897 in Heřmanova Huf. Besides owning and running the fruit trading company (named after its original owner R. E. Erben) he supplied more than 200 gas stations all over western Bohemia and he was a member of local Zionist organization.

p. 60

Egon (on the left) with his mother Josefína and his brother Vilém

He and his wife (Josefína Klára, born Köserová on November 23rd, 1897) had two children – Egon (born on February 24th, 1924) and younger Vilém (born on March 13th, 1926). The children grew up in bilingual environment – their governess changed annually from Czech to German and back again.

p. 62-63

Egon's parents - Josefína and Emil

When the school year 1934/1935 began Egon entered the first grade of a grammar school (II. československá státní reálka) where he was studying with excellent results for the next four years. Mr. Karel Kabát, his classmate of that time, says about him: *"He was very smart. Very smart! He helped me with German language. We used to sit at the same desk. He could speak perfect German and Hebrew. He used to read some Hebrew texts for me and he knew how to speak French as well."* Egon and Bohumila Wildmannová (today Červenková) were the best pupils in the class and competed in having the best marks. She talks about their struggles: *"I remember forgetting my math homework once and doing it during a break in the Ladies room. He caught me when I went out of the door and reported me. He simply wanted to have straight A school report."*

But in 1938 he had to leave the school because of his father's wish and study a more useful engineering school. This crossed his dream to become a diplomat.

p. 61

the official request for the permission to sell the car (1939) (purchase price 50 000 Czech Crowns, sale price 9 500 Czech Crowns)

By May 1938 we were getting ready for war and my dad insisted that I change schools. While his insistence that I train for the engineering profession saved my life many times over, I bitterly resisted his snuffing out my educational goals and professional dreams.

This was the family reaction on the first signs of the forthcoming danger. The situation was getting worse. After the annexation of the Sudetenland their relatives from Carlsbad (Karlovy Vary) and Marienbad (Mariánské Lázně) were forced to move to Prague. In April 1939 Egon's uncle Walter was accused of being a member of anti-Nazi organization and imprisoned in the Small Fortress of Terezín. Egon's brother Vilém left for Palestine in December 1939. In 1940 Jews were banned from studying but Egon kept meeting with his friends. In the fall of the same year he began to work in a factory manufacturing aircraft parts but he was laid off when it turned up he was Jewish. Then he worked as a technical drawer in an electrical firm. The family moved to 18 Kollárova Street and their former home became a Luftwaffe officer's club.

My mother was terrified and wanted to leave as fast as possible. My Dad thought it was

not going to be so terrible. The decision went his way. There was a small window of two weeks after the Germans occupied then it was closed. Mother was ready to go with my brother and me. She threatened that she was just taking the kids and leaving Dad behind, but finally she decided not to do that.

Egon, Josefina and Emil were transported to Terezín on January 18th, 1942. Egon found a job there in the technical department where he helped making new waterworks system blueprints. Egon lived in the room No. 127 (L218 Jugendheim). He took “underground university” courses, acted in a theatre, was a member of a Zionist movement Hechaluc and helped in a hospital (this activity was connected with an organization called Yad Tomekhet – where also Fredy Hirsch worked – which helped to care about old or abandoned people. His father had an acquaintance with a Jewish Self-administration member and this helped him to find a job of a bread teller – he took over bread delivered from a nearby village (Bohušovice) bakery and passed it on to the Terezín warehouses.

On September 28th, 1944 Egon and his father were deported to the East – the Ek transport with 2499 people arrived at Auschwitz a day later. Only 20% men and women fit for work passed the initial selection and got to the camp (Durchgangslager BIIc). The resting 80% (cca 2000 people, including Egon’s father Emil) were murdered in Birkenau gas chambers. 371 people from this transport survived till the end of the war. Josefina Löbnerová arrived at Auschwitz in the Es transport with 1600 people despatched from Terezín on October 19th, 1944. The selection chose 173 (or 169) men and women capable of work to go to the camp, the resting 1158 men, women and children were killed in the crematorium III gas chamber in Birkenau. It isn’t possible to find anything more about Egon’s mother’s fate but one thing is for sure – she wasn’t one of those 51 people from her transport that survived the war.

Shortly after his arrival in Auschwitz Egon linked up with his uncle Walter in one of the satellite camps called Janina. Together they lived through the death march to Gross-Rosen where each of them was chosen for another work. Egon was shifted to Bavarian Flossenbürg on February 14th, 1945. Thanks to his engineering education he could work there in Messerschmidt company factories as a controller. The camp was liberated by general Patton’s army in May 1945.

Three weeks later our names were being called out throughout all the men’s camp in Birkenau. It was Walter who had arranged with the Camp commandant of Janina to find his brother and nephew among the new arrivals from Theresienstadt. He was half lucky. They found me. A few days later I jumped from the truck into Walter’s arms. It was a remarkable reunion after five and one half years of separation!

I found the second Walter quite different from the first Walter that I had known before the war. He was strong. He was tough. He appeared in his white coat of a physician. He was second in command after Dr. Erich Orlik who headed up the infirmary (Krankenbau) in Janina, a small coal-mining side camp of Auschwitz owned by I.G.Farben, west of Krakau. The SS called it „The Grube der guten Hoffnung“, the mine of good hope. Walter immediately spoke to the camp Kommandant on my behalf. I was excused from the deadly work in the mine and assigned to the „Schlosser“ detail working on the surface, repairing the wagons that carried the coal and doing hard work of carrying railroad tracks and shoveling coal. Walter helped me in many ways. He gave me extra bread to eat and admitted me for a few days into the infirmary to recuperate from the hard work.

We spent another three weeks after January 18, 1945 on the death march to Gross-Rosen. We tried and managed not to get separated. However we became separated in Gross-Rosen where we volunteered for a transport of „Schlosser’s“. While marching naked past an SS-doctor Walter was recognized and yanked out from the line of volunteers. We did not see each

p. 65

**prisoners liberated in Flossenbürg
Egon with his brother Vilém in Palestine**

other for another five months.

After returning to Plzeň Egon first finished his secondary school education and in December 1945 left for abroad.

I did attempt restitution of my parent's property and my own health. I was not able to repossess items that they hid with non-Jewish people in Plzen. People just would not want to return them. The returned property constituted family photos and legal papers deposited with my father's attorney. I did not bother to re-establish my father's business and I had to sell our house because the mortgage payments far exceeded my income.

I fell in love with a young refugee woman from the Carpathian-Ukraine. I helped her and her sister to escape across the border into the Deggendorf Displaced Person Camp in Bavaria. When the US Army withdrew I went through a „war graduation“ and escaped across the border because Plzen's mayor Hrbek was after me for having insulted him by calling him before his subordinates an anti-Semite. I joined my girl in Deggendorf where I became a teacher and secretary of the Zionist organization. When my girl left to join her nearest of kin in Buffalo, New York I gave her my school certificates because I had applied for Foreign Student Scholarship with the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation in the United States.

p. 66

Egon with his wife Soňa

Egon married Soňa Sajovic (also a survivor) and they had three children – Gary (1953), Ben (1955) and Mindy (?). They settled down in the United States where they received their citizenships in 1952. Egon's dreams to become a diplomat were fulfilled and even more - he became an accredited scientist in optoelectronics. Most of his career is connected with the Hewlett-Packard Company.

The School of Engineering at the University of Buffalo was not what I expected. With the assistance of Albert Einstein I was permitted to switch to the College of Arts and Sciences and enroll in Physics major.

Egon testified about his holocaust experience. Shortly after the war he took part in the trial with an SS member who was a guard in Janina – one of the Auschwitz satellites. He also made his own research trying to find the reason why the Allies had not bombed Auschwitz.

Out of the extended family of 27 members – father, mother, younger brother, aunts, uncles and cousins – only three survived the war – Egon, his uncle Walter (the father's brother) and his younger brother Vilem who committed suicide in 1953.

p. 68

Egon (on the right) with his uncle Walter

On December 30th, 1989: a few hours before his death Egon wrote a congratulatory letter to Václav Havel, the new president of free Czechoslovakia. Egon's sons Gary and Ben live with heir families in Palo Alto, California and run firms dealing with information technology.

Terezin's Bread Teller (Egon Löbner)

On January 18, 1942, Emilek L. became ghettoized in Terezin. He was the 7,771st Jew from the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia to be imprisoned in this three quarter square mile, walled in garrisoned town which had become an involuntary „Jewish Ghetto“ on November 24, 1941.

Unbeknown to the Czech Jews setting up the Ghetto at that time, Deputy Protector SS Obergruppenfuehrer Reinhard Heydrich (chief of all but the municipal police in the Third Reich, as well as chief of its Foreign and Domestic Intelligence) had met on October 10, 1941, with his SS subordinates at the Prague Castle to establish the so called Ghetto Terezin (also known as Theresienstadt) as a temporary concentration camp for central and west European Jews before their shipment to the conquered eastern territories where they would face mass extinction. According

to the records of Heydrich's October 10 meeting in Prague, Terezin would eventually become a model settlement for Germans. Indeed nearly 87,000 Czech, German, Austrian and Dutch Jews were deported between January 9, 1942, and October 28, 1944 from Terezin „to the East.“ Of these, less than 3,000 survived the end of World War II. The number of prisoners who died in Terezin itself was recorded on August 31, 1944, to be 32,647. These plain figures belie the Nazi claim for Terezin to be a „ghetto paradise“ and „spa,“ even though a majority of the prisoners died in bed. They succumbed to digestive disorders, malnutrition and respiratory diseases and unlike prisoners in other camps, were privileged to receive a decent burial. Their individual and mass graves are there today.

At the time of his arrival Emilek was 44 years old. He was accompanied by his wife of eighteen years and their seventeen-year old son. Each of them brought with them the allowed 110 pounds of belongings, most of which consisted of a month's supply of food. The rest of their belongings were left in their home in Pilsen. Each piece of furniture, clothing, tableware, knick knock, utensil, tool and every piece of property such as shares, life insurance policies and bank books had to be listed on forms which were turned in to a gun wielding SS officer upon arrival at the Rifle Association Clubhouse, which was the collection point of the to be deported Pilsen Jews. Under the watchful eye of the officer all the listed belongings were signed over to the Jewish Resettlement Administration, an SS owned bureau which financed the destruction of European Jewry. Emilek, a prominent and well regarded businessman, knew better. Instead of turning over his cashable valuables, he burned them. But prior to their destruction he deposited all of their serial numbers with his non Jewish attorney. It worked. The SS never found out.

When, way before the deportation, Jews were deprived of white bread, meat, egg, dairy, poultry and coal rations, Emilek sold his car to a Czech butcher, and his wife sold her piano to a coal merchant. These below the table deals provided them with rationless meat and fuel for many months. They joked that they ate the car and burned the piano. On the day that Emilek left his home he showed his defiance by placing a night pot full of urine in the middle of the living room, carefully locked up the apartment, and an hour later handed the keys to the SS officer at the Rifle Association Clubhouse.

Upon arrival in Terezin the men were separated from the women and children, to be housed in separate military barracks. For many months most of the families were not able other, except for those who were reunited prior to the dreaded to see each deportation „Eastward.“

A few weeks after arrival in Terezin the food supplements brought from home became exhausted and an irritating and aching hunger set in. It drove some to steal. Many women of all ages succumbed to prostitution with men on work details in women's barracks. Fear and uncertainty also intensified the sex drive when cohabitation was forbidden and punishable.

There was a scramble for work and positions which would protect one and one's family from further deportation „Eastward“ and/or provide opportunities for supplementing one's starvation diet. The struggle for survival took on many forms. Thus jobs in the kitchens and bakeries provided additional food by misappropriation. The word stealing was only used when prisoners deprived each other of their meager possessions. This happened very seldom. Other types of illegal appropriation were called „sluicing.“ This euphemism derived from the German designation of the place where incoming transports were searched and many of their belongings taken from them. It was called „Schleusse“ in German, a metaphor for the passage of human beings from civilian to prison life. While sluicing from the kitchen or bakery deprived other prisoners of their full measure of provisions, it was accepted as a way of life in a camp where the strong took advantage of the weak in a callous and desperate attempt to prolong life and avoid starvation.

There was a second way of sluicing that did not deprive fellow prisoners of their allotted rations. This was stealing from the SS. It was very dangerous, and severe punishments were meted out to those who were caught. Those who were not caught by either the Czech gendarmes or the SS guards were considered heroes by their co prisoners. Examples of such stolen goods were tomatoes and potatoes taken by those who were privileged to work in the fields outside the Ghetto that supplied vegetables and fruit for the SS kitchen.

The other kind of jobs that were highly desired were those that were designated essential and that provided a protection from being included in the next transport „Eastward“ (called nach Osten in German). Such jobs were those of certain needed skills in carpentry, engineering and also assignments close to the top echelons of the Jewish Council of Elders which administered the

camp in strict obedience to the orders of the SS Commandant. Many high placed appointees within the administration exercised de facto powers of life and death over the other camp inmates.

Emilek was very fortunate to secure for himself a very special job. He was appointed by Mr. Schliesser, one of the elders, to a low ranking job of Terezin's Bread Teller. Since not all the bread could be baked in the Terezin bakery, somebody very trustworthy had to be responsible to receive and certify delivery of bread that was shipped by truck into Terezin from Czech bakeries in the nearby Czech village of Bohushovitse. That became Emilek's job only a few days after his arrival in Terezin. The Bread Teller's job consisted of counting every loaf of bread that was unloaded from the truck and received by the storehouse manager in the half a dozen warehouses scattered throughout the town of Terezin. The Teller signed the shipping papers for the bread truck driver and in turn received a receipt from the warehouse manager.

Emilek, who was of short stature, less than five and a half feet, found it difficult to climb into the truck. As a Jew with a yellow Star of David on his coat, he was not allowed to ride in the cab. Only the Czech gendarme sat there. Emilek could not leave his post for a moment. He was fully responsible for the proper delivery of most of the bread to the Ghetto. His life depended on the proper count.

Why was Emilek so fortunate to get such a unique job? The first 1,300 men who set up the Ghetto were volunteers. Nearly all of the Ghetto builder leaders, approved by SS Sturmbannfuhrer Adolf Eichmann (then head of the SS Jewish Emigration Post), were prominent leaders of the Prague General Zionist Organization. This included Mr. Gora Schliesser, who became the Elder in charge of the Administration's Economy and Supply Department. Emilek was among the Zionist leaders of the provincial city of Pilsen. Mr. Schliesser knew him well as an ardent Zionist and trustworthy businessman. That is why he appointed him to the job of Bread Teller.

Bread was the gold of Terezin. Besides its life sustaining function it was also the medium of exchange. One could purchase almost anything for a loaf of bread. It was, together with the illegal cigarettes, the currency standard in the Ghetto. Each third day the inmates received their bread rations. Workers received half a loaf, nonworkers a third and old people a quarter. No wonder that Emilek's job of being a Bread Teller resembled the job of bank teller, and bread delivery vehicles were treated as armored cars. During unloading of the bread, Emilek was obligated to count aloud each loaf. The counting took place in the Czech language so that the Czech gendarme could follow and check the total count when the unloading was completed.

Over a period of several weeks Emilek succeeded to work out a system by which the actual number of delivered loaves exceeded by about six the official count to be delivered by the Czech baker to the Ghetto. When the truck arrived, the driver whispered into Emilek's right ear (Emilek was deaf in his left ear) the number of excess loaves he was bringing that day into Terezin. Emilek then carefully watched the gendarme. When he thought that the gendarme became inattentive to the monotonous droning of the long count, he miscounted. He would repeat the same number twice or even three times. Thus he would count 43, 44, 45, 46, 46, 47, 48, 49, 49, 50 and so on until the correct number of excess loaves passed onto him by the truck driver became unloaded. In this way additional breads, which did not have to be accounted for, reached the warehouses of the concentration camp. The excess breads, which this resourceful teller undercounted into the Terezin Ghetto, were then divided between the warehouse manager and Emilek, who came later, usually when all was quiet during the noon break, to collect his share.

The most remarkable part of this true story is that Emilek did not use his windfall of bread riches for personal profit. Naturally he kept his wife and son from slow starvation. But the greatest portion of this undercount windfall was given free and without obligation to needy friends and strangers alike. Emilek became a one man social agency that kept over a dozen people alive for a very long time. One of Emilek's „clients“ who received a regular bread supplement was his 80 year old high school professor, Vlastimil Kraus. After the war, Kraus, an ordained Rabbi who gave up his pulpit to become a teacher, returned to Pilsen where he died a free man a few months later. He told me that besides Emilek's bread gifts, what kept him alive was a strong desire to outlive Hitler. Emilek would „adopt“ a young mother from Berlin and bring milk to her sick baby lying in the attic on a little bit of straw. And there were many others who received sustenance for months and years. They were known only to Emilek. Some may have survived but most, I am sure, did not. Neither did Emilek.

A train carrying 2,499 men, comprising transport EK, left Terezin on September 28, 1944. In

one of the cattle cars were Emilek and his son. „Destination unknown“ turned out to be Auschwitz. Even though he knew he had to undergo the rigors of a long and unpleasant journey, Emilek fasted the whole day of Yom Kippur, which preceded by one day his departure. In the cattle car, Emilek volunteered to sit underneath the excretion filled pail. As the train negotiated curves, the contents of the pail kept spilling on him.

After a few days the train reached Auschwitz. Emilek, who was only 47 years old, looked sick, exhausted and very aged. As the men became arrayed in rows of five they saw an eerie surrealistic scene. Prisoners dressed in striped pajamas were unloading the luggage left on the train. Their posture and movements were cat like and not human. They seemed like the tiger in Kipling's stories of the jungle. Not far was a building with a chimney whose exhaust flamed just as the burning exhaust from a refinery. There was a terrible stench in the air. Emilek's son turned to an SS guard, pointed to the building and asked in German: „What is that?“ The guard replied without hesitation: „A candle factory.“

Something was happening in front. An SS officer was sending the men in two directions. Emilek turned to his son and said: „I will go this way and you will go the other way.“ The son understood. His father often quoted the Bible when he explained why he divided his family rather than keeping it together in times of danger. It was Jacob, who, fearing the wrath of his heavily armed brother Esau, divided his family and belongings into two camps. When their turn came, there was no choice. The SS man, now known the world over as the notorious Dr. Mengele, separated Emilek from his son. I am that son.

Hana Porgesová

(11th March 1923 Plzeň – ? 13th June 1942)

Hana was born on March 11th, 1923. Her father's name was Emil (born on July 28th, 1887) and her mother's name was Hedvika (born on May 28th, 1887 in Buštěhrad, neé Spitzová). Her parents got married in February 1914 in Karlín, Prague and their first daughter Gerta was born on April 20th, 1915. Their first place of residence was near Příbram and later they moved to Plzeň where they lived consequently at 3 Zbrojnická Street, 6 Husova Street and 9 Bendova Street. Emil Porges was a butcher foreman.

Hana began her studies at grammar school in September 1934, but she left the school in the same school year for an unknown reason.

Then her family moved to 15 Fodermayerova Street (now the street is called Bedřicha Smetany). They were transported to Terezín on January 22nd, 1942 and on June 13th, 1942 they were taken away in an unknown transport labelled AAi that was supposed to carry 1000 people to the Trawniki camp. Most probably this transport arrived at Sobibor and almost all deportees including Hana and her parents (with numbers 290, 291 and 293) were killed in gas chambers. In the Terezín Memorial Book there is a mention about a girl named Jana Porgesová whose birth date is the same as Hana's. The protectorate authorities often confused the names Hana and Jana because they transcribed both as „Johanna“.

Hana's elder sister Gerta married Kurt Schneider (born on May 19th, 1910). They lived in Prague and in Hlinsko. At the beginning of the year 1942 they lived in Plzeň at 2 Saská Street. During the last months before the transport Kurt was employed as a worker and Gerta worked in a household. They were transported to Terezín on January 26th, 1942 and nearly three years later further to the East. Their transport (Ev) arrived at Auschwitz on October 30th, 1944, carrying 2038 people (949 men and boys, 1089 women and girls). After the selection 217 men and 132 women who were able to work were placed into the camp (Durch-

p. 73

Hana Porgesová

p. 72

a school trip of the „prima B“ class to the Buben castle in 1935

the top:

Bohumila

Wildmannová

the middle row

from the left:

Květoslava Holoubková, Šárka Suchá and Jarmila Barůňková

the bottom row

from the left:

Šárka Černá, Eva Brummelová and Hana Porgesová

gangslager BIIc). The other 1689 men, women and children died in Birkenau gas chambers. It was the last gassed transport in Birkenau. Neither Gerta nor Kurt returned from Auschwitz.

Sobibor

The extermination camp called Sobibor was located to the southeast of Lublin. It started to operate in March 1942, in April Franz Stangl became its commander (later he became the commander of Treblinka) and organized the camp according to the Belżec model. Both camps served the only purpose – to murder as many people as possible. That’s why they had a simple organizational structure. The Sobibor camp was divided into three sections: Camp 1 with the approach ramp and quarters for German and Ukrainian guards, Camp 2 where the incoming prisoners were undressed, shaved and robbed of their possessions and Camp 3 with gas chambers, mass graves and Jewish prisoners’ barracks. The staff consisted of about thirty Germans and more than a hundred Ukrainian guards. 1000 prisoners from the incoming transports were selected for work. When they got weak they were exterminated and the required number was completed by newcomers. There was an uprising in the camp on October 14th, 1943 and twelve Germans (including the camp commander) and several Ukrainians were killed. 300 prisoners escaped, but most of them died on the run. About fifty prisoners survived the war.

The Jews were deported to Sobibor from Poland, Slovakia, Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia, Germany, Holland and France. The last transports arrived from the liquidated ghettos in Vilnius, Minsk and Lida. In all, about 250 000 people were murdered there.

Arnošt Epstein

(1st March 1923 Plzeň – 23rd March 1999 Plzeň)

p. 77

Arnošt and Charlotte with their father Arnošt

Arnošt in the photo taken in the year of his graduation

Arnošt was born on March 1st, 1923 to Arnošt Epstein (born on December 15th, 1892) and Aloisie Epsteinová (born on April 22nd, 1901, neé Šperlová). Their first residence was in Nýřany and later they moved to Plzeň where their address changed several times again. The last one before the occupation was 17 Palackého Street. The father worked as a business representative. He was Jewish, but after his marriage he converted to Roman Catholicism. Their children Arnošt and Charlotte nicknamed Lotka (born on November 4th, 1925) were also baptized.

Arnošt started attending grammar school in September 1934. He graduated in 1941 and continued at an engineering school. The restrictions that affected so called “Semi-Jews” weren’t as tough as those that changed the lives of the people labelled as “Jews” according to Nuremberg Laws. That’s why Arnošt and Charlotte could study longer – till 1943. After the war Arnošt worked for a building firm, he never got married and died in 1999. Charlotte still lives in Plzeň. This is her family story:

“My father was one of nine siblings and only two of them survived. One moved to France

as he married a Frenchwoman in Strasburg. The other one was my father. He lived in a mixed marriage. His siblings had to go to transports in 1942, to Terezín, Auschwitz and other destinations, but my father didn't. At the beginning of the year 1945 when the war was almost over my father was transported to Terezín, not into the prison but into the ghetto. He spent about four months there. Before that he was in the detention of the Plzeň Gestapo for a few days. My mother went there and because she could speak perfect German – she was from Nýřany in Sudetenland – she tried to settle it somehow but it was no use.

As a Semi-Jewish man, Arnošt was sent to the Postoloprty work camp in September 1944. The conditions were bearable there; he could receive packages with food. But he never unpacked them; he rewrote the address and sent them to our father to Terezín. He was there till May 1945 and then he escaped – three weeks before the end of the war. He was approved as a participant in the national fight for liberation.

We, women, could stay here until 1945 when we had to come in for a registration to Dejvice in Prague. It was probably the beginning of our deportation that didn't continue because the war was over.

The Jews also had to wear a yellow star on their coats but we didn't. That was another relief. Our flat was taken by Germans and we moved to Prokopova Street – we were three families living in one four-roomed flat. There were ration books during the war and my father got only some of them – for example there were rations for meat and he couldn't get any. He worked as a street sweeper and my mother went to help the bricklayers to be able to buy me a watch. I got a job of a messenger. After the war I returned to school, but my class didn't graduate – we only got a certificate that we could study at the university. The first thing my father said when he came home from the concentration camp was: 'Lotka will study!' That's because my brother wasn't really a keen student."

Mr. Evžen Czinner, a former prisoner from Postoloprty:

"The camp in Postoloprty was planned for those who weren't supposed by the Nazis to socialize with other people. The prisoners' work was to build a jet airplane airfield in Žatec. In nearby Bažantice there was another camp – it consisted of eleven newly built wooden houses.

Arnošt worked for Strabach engineering company which built landing grounds and hangars; prisoners were transported to building sites in wagons each day.

The work lasted eleven hours every day; elder people could stay in the camp and cook, clean up, bring water and care for sick people. The weekly ration of coal was hardly enough for two days – people used to steal it a lot.

We escaped on April 21st, 1945 – to Děněšice, then to Rakovník which was bombed and Blatno. We arrived at Třemošná on a train and then we continued on foot to Pilsen."

Hanuš Deiml

(6th June 1922 Kožlany – 31st July 1972 Praha)

"I remember seeing Hanuš Deiml in the corridor. He was a remarkable and handsome boy," Mrs Jarmila Krejzová (former classmate, neé Bartůňková) says about Hanuš, who was born on June 6th, 1922 to Pavel (born on October 14th, 1891) and Olga (neé Löblová, birth date unknown). The Deiml family lived at 8 Plachého Street. The father was a building official.

Hanuš left school in February 1938 when he was in the fifth grade. His mother stayed at home and he and his father began working as loggers.

They had to change their place of residence and moved to the father's brother's house No 29 in Plasy. All the Deimls were transported to Terezín on January 18th, 1942 and on December 18th, 1943 they were included in the "DS"

transport which headed for Auschwitz. Father, uncle Bedřich and his wife Alžběta did not pass the initial selection and were murdered.

Hanuš was liberated in Altenburg at the end of the war. He married Jarmila Čoudková and two years later in 1951 they had a son called Pavel. Hanuš's cousin Jiří Deiml moved to Israel in 1968 and married Erika Rott. Their grandson Elon Deiml recently takes courses at the Charles University in Prague.

"After his return from the concentration camp he lived with his cousin Jiří in Plasy for a short time. When they got a flat in Prague and his mother finally returned as well (she spent the last days of the war seriously ill in a concentration camp), all three of them lived there. Hanuš found a job in technical industry. Later he worked as a member of a company council and as a leader mechanic," his wife Jarmila Deimlová says.

Hanuš died in 1972 and his son Pavel in 1995. His grandchildren Katka Deimlová and Petr Deiml live in Prague.

Hanuš Lamač

(14th February 1922 Plzeň)

p. 84, 86

Hanuš Lamač

I was born in Plzeň on February 14th, 1922 at 9 Kramářovy Sady. I was the only child of a trader Vítězslav Löw and Irma Löw (neé Neubauer). I attended a German school in Jungmannova Street for five years and then I started to study at a grammar school (II. československá státní reálka). Most of my friends at that time went to other schools, mainly the other grammar school. Besides Jirka Deiml I remember Franta Fischer, who is very ill and hospitalized for the last four years in Hamburg, Honza Schulhof who emigrated to Australia, Karel Immergut, Franta Löwidt, Fritzek Weiss and some more who all are dead, Honza Neumann who was a captain in the US army and I met him in Prague in 1945, Honza Auer who emigrated to England and moved afterwards to Canada, Heinz Hübsch the same thing also went from England to Canada, I met him in Montreal in 1974, but he was not the type to keep up contact. He was an expert in aviation and had a fantastic job as number one in an aircraft factory. Unfortunately we lost contact but not through my fault. As a matter of fact after so many years people mostly do not keep up contact especially when one does not see each other for so many years.

When the Germans came, I had to find a job. At first I worked in a large industrial complex then I was sent to kaolin works in Horní Bříza. That was really hard work, I got a Schwesstarbeiter Lebensmitellkarten and that meant something. I used to get up at five o'clock in the morning and the train back used to go at six o'clock in the evening – that meant late arrivals home. We had been living in our own flat at 19 Sedláčkova Street until January 1942 when the Germans transported us to Terezín in a transport marked "T". We were allowed to take only a small suitcase, everything else had to stay as it was and the key had to be in the keyhole. The winter was cold in 1942, it was freezing, ten or fifteen degrees below zero.

In Terezín I tried a variety of jobs and finally I ended up working in a bakery. That was an advantage because we weren't starving. I wasn't separated from my parents and therefore the life in the ghetto was quite bearable. I even had a girlfriend – a very pretty young lady called Kitty Zentnerová. She came from Karlovy Vary and she was in Terezín with her mother. When I was included in a transport to the East in 1944, Kitty managed to claim for my replacement and I could stay in Terezín. I am sure she saved my life because this whole transport went right to the gas chamber. In May 1944 I was placed in a transport again, this time with my parents. This transport also went to Auschwitz. We passed the selection several times and finally my father and I were both sent to the concentration camp of Blechhammer which belongs

to Auschwitz. We were working in a factory producing artificial gasoline for the Germans. My mother was sent somewhere else and I never managed to find out where and how she had died.

There were 70 000 people in Blechhammer including English, French and Italian prisoners of war. The local factory producing gasoline was a frequent target of allied air-raids.

My father became ill and on October 13th he was sent to Birkenau where he was murdered in a gas chamber. In the end of the year 1944 I was hospitalized in the camp hospital, with pneumonia, the hospital was separated from the concentration camp and located in a wood. I met two other prisoners, both Czechs, who were also in the hospital, and we planned to run away as it was easier from the hospital as there were hardly any guards, so one day after our decision, and noticing that no guards were around, we got out of the hospital and ran into the woods at 4 o'clock in the morning. The Russian front was quite near as we heard the sound of the bombing and the gun battles between the Russians and the Germans. We walked towards this bombing and managed to cross to the Russian side, it was very cold and we met Russian patrols who were protecting a nearby bridge crossing a river to the Russian headquarters. We identified ourselves as escapees from a concentration camp and we were received by a Russian woman officer from the political police. By chance this woman was Jewish and agreed to help us giving us food and clothing. We went further to the east, we slept at farmhouses, each night somewhere else, we were wading through the deep snow and freezing – it was twenty or thirty degrees below zero. We spent some time in a Krakow monastery. Our goal was to join the Svoboda's army as volunteers. Therefore we had to march 400 kilometres to Poprad to its headquarters. We covered this distance partly walking and partly on Russian military trucks. We came to the city of Poprad and after some complex identification of ourselves, as we had no papers, we finally were accepted to the Czech army, all three of us, who escaped together from Blechhammer. We were incorporated in the Czech army and did the whole way from there to Prague under difficult situations and combats.

I was reunited with my fiancé who came back from Terezín together with her mother and I finished my studies like other soldiers who were in England, Russia or Africa did. I was demobilised from the army in September 1945 after some time spent serving in Sudetenland. Honza Müller was there with me and we both then lived in Karlín in Prague for some time.

I tried to enter the university, but instead started to work in a lawyers office whose two owners were also soldiers but arrived from England and afterwards I got a job with Canadian Commercial Enterprises, which was British Bata shoe company, at that time separated from the Bata in Czechoslovakia. I started as a correspondent in English, German and French and during the last time I was the second chief of the office. The manager was an Englishman named Mr. Maltby. Our firm was accused of spying and our offices were closed in February 1948 within one hour.

One year before that I married Kitty Zentnerová. After all I went through I didn't want to live in Europe any longer and I tried to apply for a transfer somewhere over the ocean. Next day I was on my way to Holland and England. My wife Kitty remained in Czechoslovakia and had many difficulties abroad to meet me. In the end she got to Denmark where her mother got married after the war. This was in September 1948 and 4 months later we took a ship from Liverpool to Chile. I live now 56 years in Chile; I arrived on February 14, 1949 just on my birthday. I was still young at that time, I was 27 years old.

We liked it there. We had some friends there and we found a beautiful country of European style. We had a variety of jobs until we properly learned the language. We were supported by some Czechs and Slovaks who had come earlier or came later.

Kitty suffered of a heart disease and died of it in 1952 in Santiago de Chile. She was twenty-six years old.

I married again in 1955, my new wife was born in Germany, grew up in England and during the war she went to Chile where her parents and her brother lived.

p. 84

the central card-index - transports (registered in the evidence again)

p. 85

the document about the change of Hanuš Lów's surname to Lamač (2nd November 1945)

In 1973 we moved to Vancouver, Canada because we did not want to live in a communist country under president Allende's lead – Chile seemed to become a second Cuba. Fortunately, the situation changed and we returned in 1975 after our son Miguel finished his studies in Canada.

Jiří Schanzer

(22nd October 1921 Dolní Lukavice - ? Auschwitz)

He came from Dolní Lukavice, a village near Plzeň, and they also had relatives in Rakovník. He lived with his parents and grandparents in a small house. There was also a small grocery, which is now reminded by two doorways leading to the street. Next door there was Hynek Bloch's house. According to the report of the district authorities from March 1941 the Schanzers and the Blochs were the only Jewish families in Dolní Lukavice.

When Jirka was a small child his mother died and his father got married again. He married Eliška Wollnerová and they had another son called Josef. Their lives were quiet, their Tatra car used to stand in front of the house, the yard was teeming with hens and the attic served as a secret laboratory for experiments - Jiří was an amateur chemist. His cousin Milan Plešák tells:

"We never made very good friends. Actually he did not have many friends because he was a swot. He was reading books all the time and I never saw him going anywhere, chatting with other guys in front of the house or going dancing. I would ride a bicycle there and I often came unexpectedly, but he was always in the lab. He made experiments there and once it even exploded. He was learning so well that he nearly blew their house up. His aunt and uncle used to praise him (but just till the explosion)."

Another story illustrating the lively atmosphere in their house was passed on among their relatives. Jiří's dog was disobedient and kept stealing eggs from their hens. One day it found some addled eggs foisted between the good ones and that taught the dog such a lesson that it became one of the most obedient dogs in the neighbourhood.

In September 1927 he started to attend school in Dolní Lukavice. He finished the five years of elementary studies there and had such subjects as arithmetic, surveying, nature study and national history and geography. Although he struggled with writing at the beginning, he was an exemplary schoolboy – without absence and with obviously deserved A for behaviour and effort. In the class catalogue there is only one negative comment on his behaviour: "8th June 1931 – He scuffled". The same source also gives information about his temporary "expulsion for diphtheria" in November 1931. For the whole time of Jiří's studies there were both a Roman Catholic vicar and rabbi Leopold Singer.

In 1932 he started to commute to Plzeň to be educated at a grammar school, first at "Státní reálné gymnázium" and then at "II. československá státní reálka". During the first years he used to have a spirit: sometimes he "was disturbing during the singing lesson" or just "often disturbed". But he finished his studies successfully in 1939.

His plan to study chemistry was crossed by the Nazis. He took part in a minor Prague resistance and at the beginning of 1942 he tried to go abroad to join a foreign army. He was eighteen years old and he did not tell about his plans

p. 88

Schanzer family's house (1920)

p. 89-90

photographs from the elementary school in Dolní Lukavice

even to his closest family members. Shortly after crossing the Hungarian border he was caught by Gestapo and taken first to Slovakia and later to Moravia. He was imprisoned in Uherské Hradiště and in Brno. Afterwards he was transported to the concentration camp in Dachau and then to Buchenwald. In November 1942 the last message comes – a letter to his father which has not survived till today.

According to fellow prisoners' later testimonies Jiří was also deported to Auschwitz where he probably stayed till the liberation in 1945. He either succumbed to exhaustion and diseases or might have died during one of the death marches. Jiří's step cousin, Milan Plešák from Litice near Plzeň, met a former prisoner who claimed that Jiří Schanzer almost came back to Plzeň. But a few kilometres outside the city they were loaded into a train which then was standing a long time at a Plzeň railway station and passers by were throwing bread inside. The transport was under a strict quarantine and many people died there.

Jiří's father, Heřman Schanzer, did not survive as well. He was transported from Klatovy to Terezín on November 26th, 1942 and shortly after that (20th January 1943) to Auschwitz. In a document called "Pronouncement About Death" there is 20th July 1943 written as his last day. Jiří's brother Josef, his mother and grandparents also died in Auschwitz – in a so called "Terezín Family Camp".

Several years later a group of his relatives initiated examining the circumstances of their family members' deaths and tried to close this chapter once and for all with official documents. One of the people was Heřman's sister-in-law Marta Plešáková. She was also imprisoned during the war, her son Milan was in the Postoloprty work camp as a half-blood Jew and her husband was in Bystřice u Prahy, in another work camp for people from mixed marriages. Others who initiated the examination were Věra Hartmannová, Jiří's cousin who also went through Auschwitz, Hana Bendová and Věra Berlinerová. Almost all of their other relatives, the Štěpán family, died in the Lodž ghetto...

p. 88

Věra Hartmannová initiated the official examination of Jiří Schanzer's case (see the document on page 91). On page 88, you can see a **public notice** asking for potential testimonies about the fate of the disappeared.