Herta Coufalova

Herta Coufalova
Sumperk
Czech Republic
Interviewer: Barbora Pokreis
Date of interview: November 2004

Mrs. Coufalova is a sprightly, vital older lady, who despite her advanced age has a big interest in literature and travel. She lives in a small Czech town called Sumperk, not far from her three daughters. Her biggest joy in life is her great-grandson Davidek. Daily she visits her granddaughter Lenka, who is a single mother, to help her out. Mrs. Coufalova is a very affable, intelligent lady with a sense of humor. The interview was made on the premises of the Jewish community in Brno at 3 Kapitan Jaros Avenue. Mrs. Coufalova answered our questions obligingly and willingly. The interview took place during two sessions.

My family background

All of my grandparents, except for Grandma Hermina Reich, my mother's mother, came from Trebic. Both grandfathers - my father's father Hermann Glasner, and my mother's father Hermann Reich - were businessmen. The Reichs had a 'white goods' shop. They sold everything to do with white cloth, for example towels and dishcloths. The Glasners, as their name indicates, were in the glass business. They had a glass and porcelain shop.

My grandmother, Hermina Reich, nee Mayer was born on 9th July 1875 in Pohorelice in Southern Moravia. She died on 15th July 1944 in Auschwitz. She left Terezin 1 on the last transport of old people. Her husband, Herman Reich, was born on 12th March 1869, and died on 19th February 1929. I don't remember my grandfather very much. I was only three years old when he died. He would always borrow a horse-drawn sleigh and drive us around the surrounding villages.

My grandparents' mother tongue was German, but they also spoke Yiddish. I assume that they had a basic education. Grandma Reich went to a Jewish school in Pohorelice when she was young, because in Moravia people used to be very religious. My grandmother was a born businesswoman. After her husband's death she ran his white goods store for some time, eventually though she sold it.

My mother's grandparents lived on Dolni Street in Trebic, in a neighborhood called 'v Zidech' [At the Jews] - today that part of town is a UNESCO cultural heritage site. There were always a lot of Jews in Trebic. Even today, when there are none left, the town retains certain Jewish characteristics. My mother's parents owned a house, which stands to this day, on the main square, opposite the synagogue. The house was comprised of two larger rooms, one smaller one and a 'black kitchen' with fireplace. They already had electricity, but running water wasn't brought to that part of town until 1936 or 1937; until then they carried it from public pumps.

Despite the fact that my grandmother came from a religious family, she didn't wear a wig. One couldn't say that my grandfather was religious. He didn't wear a beard, payes or a kippah. Trebic had a modern Jewish community. Not even the cantor and rabbi wore a beard. Men wore black hats. I rarely saw them without a hat. They felt Jewish and went to the synagogue on the major religious holidays. They had kosher households, ate kosher meat and never mixed meat and dairy products.

My grandmother on my father's side was named Pavla Glasner, nee Orchstein. She was born in 1845 in Trebic and died there in 1930. Grandpa was named Hermann Glasner. He was born in the same year, and even in the same town as his wife. He died in 1922, also in Trebic. If it hadn't been for Mr. Hitler none of us would have ever set foot outside of that town. In their home town they had a shop named Hermann Glasner. My grandmother had the reputation of a very capable businesswoman. In the summer she used to sit in front of the shop and would always knit socks that were so well made that my father and his brother could never wear them out. I remember those socks to this day, even their color, grey and black. In the winter she also sat by the doorway of the shop, but inside, and knitted. She called people that came in and didn't buy anything 'Indians'. Where she got that name and why she called them that, I don't know.

The Glasners lived on the town square, to be exact, in a place then called 'U Piku'. Later they moved, as they say, only a few steps further on. They bought a larger house, which stands to this day. There they built a crossing, where via a footbridge people could get directly into the Jewish Town [ghetto in Trebic]. It was a large apartment with a spacious circular hall. My grandparents' house consisted of two small, four larger and three beautiful large rooms. They had electricity and running water. The only disadvantage I could see was that it didn't have a yard. In the beginning they had two maids, when they got older they sufficed with one. Grandpa employed six people in the shop. None of them were of Jewish origin.

My grandparents on my father's side didn't have a kosher household. They went to the synagogue sporadically, usually only during major religious holidays and at maskir. Otherwise they didn't. Grandpa didn't wear a beard or payes and my grandmother never wore a wig. These things weren't worn in Trebic, ours wasn't a religious town.

I don't remember much about the siblings of my grandparents, the Glasners. Grandpa had three siblings. Uncle Kurt lived in Vienna. Then there were Uncle Leo and Aunt Frida. Other than their names I don't know anything about them. My grandmother's siblings I don't remember at all.

In the days of my youth [the 1930s] Trebic had approximately 22,000 inhabitants, of those around 250 to 270 were people of Jewish faith [according to the 1930 census Trebic had 17,555 inhabitants]. Jews didn't live in just the ghetto any more, but had spread out all over town. At the end of World War I Jews inhabited the upper and lower streets, which formed the ghetto. This part

of town was called Zamosti [Behind the Bridge]. As the Jewish population increased, the ghetto couldn't accommodate them all. Jews began to flow over to those parts of Trebic where Catholics lived. Because most of them made their living as merchants, they moved to the town square, where there was the greatest population density, this being good for business. At the beginning of the 1930s all of Trebic already had electricity. However, running water still wasn't everywhere. Water wasn't brought to all households until 1936 to 1938. All of the streets in town were paved with stone and not dirt streets.

We weren't Orthodox; in fact there weren't any Orthodox Jews in town [see Orthodox communities] 2. None of the men wore payes, a tallit or kippah. Despite this there lived among us even quite deeply religious people. Our family also kept up traditions. We always felt ourselves to be Jews.

There was only one synagogue in town, which stood on Dolni Street in Zidech [part of the former Jewish ghetto in Trebic]. After the war it was bought by the Czechoslovak Church. The town also had a prayer hall, which we used to visit in winter, during which the synagogue wasn't heated. The prayer hall also served as a school after the anti-Jewish laws [in the Protectorate of Bohemia-Moravia] 3 came into force.

The rabbi in Trebic was named Ingber. He came from Ruthenia [see Subcarpathia] 4, from a poor family. He had many children. He promoted reformed Judaism. We used to study Ivrit with him. He didn't lead us toward tradition, but rather to a modern, conscious life. For example, even in pre-World War II Trebic would you have found a mikveh or cheder. Izidor Polnauer was the shochet and at the same time the shammash.

Most Jews in town made their living as merchants. A large number of them owned textile shops. A typical Jewish shop was for example that of the Fuersts. They sold textiles and wool. There were also landowners like Mr. Goldmann, who had a large estate. You could also find a few tradesmen, such as tailors and shoemakers. Besides the store, our family also had a glass workshop.

My father was born on 17th February 1885 in Trebic. His name was Emanuel Glasner. My father's mother tongue was German, but besides this he also spoke Czech and Yiddish. He completed his basic schooling in Trebic. He studied business in Vienna. There he also began his compulsory military service, which lasted three years. That was in the year 1911. After the end of his term of service in 1914, World War I broke out, so he once again had to join up. He served on the Russian front, where he was captured. He didn't get back home until 1922. After he returned, he and his brother Wilhelm took over the family store Hermann Glasner. They were successful, and built up a large glass and porcelain shop.

Growing up

My mother, Irma Glasnerova, nee Reich, was born on 18th January 1902. I don't remember her Jewish name. My mother's native tongue was German, so she did her basic schooling in a German school. After that she graduated from a business academy, but that was already in Czech. She also spoke Yiddish. She spoke German with her parents, but Czech with us. Before she married she worked as a secretary in the Zubak factory. It was a large tannery. After her wedding she no longer worked, but took care of the household and of us children. We never had a nanny. She used to go on walks with us, taught us how to swim. She made my life miserable with piano. Every day after lunch I had to practice. In the beginning she always stood above me like Damocles' sword.

My parents never told me about how they met. They were married on 15th February 1925 in Trebic. The wedding ceremony was of course Jewish. It's said that on the day of the wedding my father had such a bad case of the flu that their wedding night came to nothing. For a long time after, my mother kept her wedding bouquet, made of elder and lilacs. She had it stored away in a box printed with a flower pattern.

My parents dressed according to the times. We lived well, and never knew hunger. We weren't poor, we had everything. Quite often someone would play the piano and everyone read a lot. We didn't have a car or radio. Our father didn't like it. We lived in the upper street, 92 Husova. It was in Zamosti, in Zidech. We had a large five-room house. Always cold, we constantly had to heat it. We didn't have running water yet, but my grandparents who lived on the town square did. Our house had a large garden. We didn't grow anything in it besides chives and parsley. Mother had roses planted there. In the garden there was a small bower with climbing roses on each side. Another bower was covered in climbing vines, whose tendrils meandered down the terrace. In the fall they had beautifully colored leaves.

Up to when I was ten we always had a maid at home. When the last one got married, my mother proclaimed that she didn't want another. My grandmother Hermina Reich was an extremely energetic, relatively young woman. According to her no one else knew how to cook, wash, clean and properly shop, so she did all these things herself.

We had a kosher household. We never mixed meat and dairy products. We had special, dedicated kitchen utensils. We also had special utensils for Passover; we would exchange them so that there wouldn't be any chametz left over. We didn't eat pork. We would go with our mother to the synagogue every Friday evening. Our father would go only on the major holidays and at maskir. At home we observed all holidays. During Sabbath Grandma recited the Kiddush and blessed the barkhes. Before that two candles would be lit. Once in a while my uncles would come for Sabbath, but otherwise we didn't usually have guests.

As a child I liked all the holidays, because each one had its special magic. I was one of the few children that liked going to the synagogue. Passover, that was a beautiful holiday. Before the holiday started we would clean the entire house. The Passover dishes would be brought down from the attic. We would put the everyday dishes in a box and carry it upstairs. The whole house was always topsy turvy. For Chanukkah we usually sang. My job was to each day light a candle, each day one additional one. We got gifts from our parents, not with each candle, but we did get some. For Sukkot we didn't have a tent [sukkah]. A tent was set up in front of the synagogue. I don't remember any more exactly how many people would meet in the tent, but there were a lot, mainly we children. The rabbi would always gather us around and tell us many stories about the holidays. The Kiddush was recited, and everyone got small barkhes. During Simchat Torah we walked around the synagogue with blue and white flags and each of us got a box of pastries. As a child I also liked Yom Kippur. At a very young age I began to fast and I was always very glad when I held out until the end. We then had a celebratory supper and the whole family went to the synagogue. For the first food after Yom Kippur we would have sweet-filled buns with coffee.

Our house had an extensive library. As I child I loved to read. Someone was always bothering me, so I would lock myself in the bathroom and read. I didn't care if there was a queue in front of the door. I was curious and read everything, but newspapers were my favorite. I inherited this passion

from my father. I would read every single page. Each day we bought Lidove Noviny 5, the Morgen Post for Grandma, on Sunday we always read the Prager Tagblatt 6, which came every two weeks, and we were also used to having an illustrated newsmagazine and Narodni Politika. [Editor's note: the publisher of the paper Narodni Politika or (National Political Post) was the printing and publishing house Politika. Its philosophy during the First Czechoslovak Republic (1918-1938) was close to the Czechoslovak National Democrats. The paper was popular for its multi-page classified insert Maly oznamovatel.] Mother and Grandma read all sorts of books. Besides regular books we also had prayer books for all holidays at home. Those I have until this day. During the war our neighbor hid them away. After the war ended he defended himself that he had to burn The History of the Czech Nation, because he was afraid of the Gestapo, but he didn't even touch the prayer books, because he was a deeply religious Catholic.

I don't remember my parents' political opinions, they didn't interest me. They weren't members of any political party or organization. My father always said: "Do what you like, you can go to Sokol 7, to the Scouts [see Czech Scout Movement] 8, but always remain a Jewess.' It was his credo. My father always identified his nationality as Jewish, which after the war they changed to Czech. No one from our family was a member of any political party.

We didn't have any immediate Jewish neighbors, only Christians. They were very decent people, who treated me very well after the war. Those, about whom I thought who knows what they're really like, helped me very much. Conversely, those I expected would help me, would even have denied the nose between their eyes. We never had any problems with our neighbors due to our being Jewish.

My parents didn't like to socialize. They met only with their siblings. Mother had three siblings, my father nine. They would all meet up in Trebic, but most of them lived in Vienna. Most frequently we saw my aunt [Jenny Beer, nee Glasner], who lived in Brno. My father was among people all day and didn't need any additional company. He was a passionate tarot player. Each Sunday he would go to the cafe U Ceplichalu. That was where the Jewish society met and where social life took place. During the week he was also used to taking off for an hour here and there, so he could play cards.

We weren't used to going anywhere on holidays. One could say that we had holidays all year round. Our mother was at home with us all day. She would take us on outings. We used to go swimming in local Trebic ponds. On Sunday we would manage to cajole Father into also coming along. Those were different times than now.

My father was one of nine children. He spent most of his time with his brother Wilhelm, with whom he took over grandpa's glass and porcelain store. Uncle Wilhelm had four children. All of them had a high-school education and two of them began studies at university. My cousins Mordecai and Leo [the sons of Wilhelm Glasner] were fervent Zionists. Mordecai, who they called Modsche, left in 1927 for Palestine. Cousin Leo followed him in 1938. Their sister, whose name I don't remember, met a man who came to Trebic from Palestine on vacation. They were married in 1935. Their wedding was the last big Jewish wedding in Trebic. To this day we wonder where the Glasners got top hats and a carriage. The young couple settled in Palestine. They were all chalutzim and lived in kibbutzim. Their youngest sister Helena stayed in Trebic. I visited her often, despite the fact that she was older than I. She didn't survive World War II. She died in Auschwitz.

Another of Father's brothers, Samuel, lived in Prague. Yet another, Michael, lived in Vienna. My father's sisters were named Lotte, Jenny, Erna, Klementina and Berta. They all married and belonged to the middle class, except for Aunt Erna, who was better off. Her husband, Max Durnheim was the director of the Danube Steamship Company in Vienna [Editor's note: the royally patented company was created in 1830 as a joint-stock company, on the basis of a patent registered by private individuals in 1828. The first steamship traveled in 1830 from Ebersdorf to Pest, but regular connections between Vienna and Pest weren't established until 1831. This route was soon expanded by a connection between Vienna and Bratislava and between Bratislava and the Lower Danube. The Danube Steamship Co. soon became the largest transport company and had a great influence on the development of transportation in Hungary. The company was headquartered in Vienna.] Almost all of my father's siblings died during the Holocaust. Only Uncle Samuel managed to survive.

My mother had three brothers, but I don't remember them much. Uncle Walter, along with his wife Hana and daughter Ruth, died in Poland during the Holocaust. The same fate met Uncle Fritz and his wife Feodora. Their daughter Emma however managed to survive. Today she lives in Montreal, in Canada. The last of my mother's brothers, Uncle Bertold, died in 1945 during a death march. His wife Franzi [Franciska Reichova, nee Kohoutovas] and son Peter didn't survive the war either.

We saw our relatives in Trebic on a daily basis. Every day I would run around and visit everyone to find out what was going on. We saw our relatives from Vienna only during summer vacation, because during that time they would always come to Trebic for a week. My father's sister Jenny and her husband used to come from Brno to visit us fairly often, as they had a car. They used to come, as one would say these days, 'for a cup of coffee'.

I was born on 23rd January 1926 in Trebic. During childhood I spent most of my time with my mother and grandmother Hermina. We never had a nanny. I would say that I was brought up by all of my relatives. I was an active child, and was always running around somewhere. My mother wanted me to take piano lessons, become a Scout, go to Sokol, and take German, English... I was always off at some lessons or activity. I loved to read, I read everything that came into my hands.

My school was close to home, on the same street. As soon as I ran down our steps, I was at municipal school. After municipal school 9 I went to council school 10 because my father wanted me to have a practical education. Today there is a medical school in the building of the former council school. In the third year of council school I was accepted at a business academy, but I didn't get the chance to start it. It was the year 1939 and regulations were passed that expelled Jewish children from schools [see Exclusion of Jews from schools in the Protectorate] 11.

I liked all subjects in school, except for math and physics, but my favorites were history, geography and literature. My favorite teachers were Mr. Vagner, who taught us geography and history, and my Czech teacher. They were excellent teachers. They knew how to attract the children's interest, and also had the appropriate literature for teaching. Until 1937 I never felt any anti-Semitism in school. At that time the school had a stupid catechism teacher, I don't remember his name, and at Easter told some girl, the types that sat only in church, that the preparation of matzot involves using the blood of Christian virgins and that we Jews crucified Jesus Christ. Those girls then began to bully me. They would dip my pigtails in ink, and constantly harassed me with various stupid comments. Truth be told, I didn't sit back and take it, I yelled at them but good. It ended up being a

big to-do. My father had to come to school. After that things settled down.

As I child I had a busy schedule. I was always off somewhere: twice a week to piano lessons, twice weekly German, twice weekly English, twice weekly exercise at Sokol, and once a week to the Scouts. I loved scouting. Once a week we had a meeting where everyone wore a brown kerchief around their neck. We organized various trips, which every year culminated in summer camp. I went to three in all. We used to go on outings in the surrounding countryside, along the Jihlava River. Ski trips cost 50 halers and for another 50 halers we ordered tea with rum and felt like kings. The scout troop had only a few of Jewish members. Most Jews went to Sokol. Sokol was an athletic organization and similarly to the scouts organized various summer camps. A couple of years before the war my father forbade me from attending it. I never found out why, but the truth is that its management was quite chauvinistic.

I was the spitting image of my father and everywhere I went people recognized me and said: 'You must be Manka [a diminutive of Emanuela], Glasner's daughter.' Of course, when they came into my father's store, they would immediately tell him where they had met his daughter. I loved my father, even more than my mother. It's just that it really annoyed me that I was recognized everywhere I went.

I was a sociable child. I had many friends, both from school and from among my relatives. My friends were mostly non-Jews, because there weren't many Jews of my age in Trebic. We had this gang of school friends. We would go bicycling around the outskirts of town. I still see three of my former classmates, even now that we're all retired. They were nice girls, and never cared that I was Jewish.

My brother Harry Glasner was born on 20th September 1929. We had a good relationship, though it's true that I used to beat him to a pulp. I guess I was jealous of him, because I was a hulk and he was my exact opposite. To me they were always saying: 'You're eating again already!' and to him: 'Please, just one more bite...'. When hard times came, my parents would hide meat and roasts for him, because I didn't need it. Harry finished only four years of public school. He had his bar mitzvah in Terezin; it was a very simple ceremony. Only my grandmother Hermina Reich and I were there. The ceremony took place in a room that had been adapted as a prayer hall. He was for the first time summoned to the Torah and they accepted him into the society of men. I don't know who prepared him; we weren't together much. I had to go to work. He lived at L 417, a youth home. They deported him to Auschwitz on 16th October 1944. They sent him straight to the gas chamber.

We had religion lessons twice a week, where we studied Ivrit from textbooks by Dr. Feder. Later I got to know him personally in Terezin, where he did a lot for us. In Trebic we were led to be conscious of our Jewishness, but not to a religious lifestyle. At home I studied with my mother, or alone. My father was always in the store. The shop was open from 6am to 12pm and then from 12.30 to 6pm. After work I would always run to meet him. Every Friday evening and Saturday, before I started to attend school, my mother and I would go to the synagogue together.

During my childhood I never experienced any anti-Semitism. I'm sure it was there, just not that apparent. In the year 1939, when they threw all Jews out of school, they opened a so-called Alia school in the building where the prayer hall was. This school was open until 1941, when the Gestapo closed it. We were even taught by university professors who had been forbidden to teach otherwise. We also studied religion. We studied Hebrew from a book that had been published by

Rabbi Feder, so that we would be able to read religious texts. They were preparing us for emigration to Israel. After the school in Trebic was closed I used to go to Brno, where a similar school had been opened, in the building of the Jewish community [on today's Kapitan Jaros Avenue]. There was even a Jewish high school in Hybesova Street, which had a large garden. There we studied agricultural methods. Our teacher was Mrs. Haas, the wife of composer Pavel Haas. [Haas, Pavel: (1899-1944): composer, born in Brno died in Auschwitz.] It was a good school, because they taught us practical subjects that were very useful to us in later life.

During the war

The anti-Jewish laws gradually changed our lives. We had to give up our jewelry, fur coats. We didn't have a radio, because my father didn't like it. I even had do give up my bicycle that I had gotten in 1938. The Gestapo arrested my father in 1941 and took him away to Jihlava. We never saw him again. We never found out the reason for his arrest. I think that our neighbor, who worked for the police, denounced him. He was at our place twice during house searches by the Gestapo. After my father was arrested they froze our bank accounts. We had no cash. Everything stayed in the store. In December 1941 we got a telegram in which was written: 'Ihr Ehemann ist im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz verstorben.' [German for 'Your husband died in the Auschwitz concentration camp']. In October of 1941 the Gestapo summoned my mother as well; it was on the second day of the Rosh Hashanah holiday. That was the last time that I saw her. From Jihlava they sent her straight to Ravensbruck 12. I and my grandma Hermina remained alone.

During this time Jews were being expelled from certain towns, for example Jihlava, which had to be judenfrei 13. Most of the Jews from Jihlava moved to Trebic, to the former Jewish ghetto in Zamosti. There were seven of us crammed into our house, I and my brother, Grandma, Uncle and Aunt Lang and their children Ludka and Petrik. Quite enough for one toilet and kitchen. Food was distributed via a system of coupons. We could only go shopping at a certain time, in only one store. We used to get a much smaller ration than Aryans. Despite the bad times there were people that risked their lives and helped us. Mr. Novacek, my father's friend from World War I, used to come visit us. He would bring cheese, milk and eggs. He also helped a lot after the war. A few years after the fall of the German Fascist regime the Communists sent him off to the Jeseniky Mountains where the poor man died.

We had no money, our bank accounts were blocked. We had to gradually sell our furniture, a beautiful Petrof piano... In May of 1942 an edict was passed that all Jews had to leave Trebic. Two transports set out from the region of Jihlava, to which Trebic belongs. In March or April a list of all Jews was drawn up and in May we gathered in the Trebic high school. We were there for only a short time. They sent us to Terezin via the AW transport. Each person was allowed a maximum of 50 kilos of luggage. At that time the trains didn't travel directly to Terezin. We got off in Bohusov and from there walked to Terezin. We younger ones managed the trip and the heavy load, but for older people it must have been very exhausting. We tried to help them with their luggage. After we arrived at the Terezin ghetto we each got a registration number and a mattress. They divided us up and put us into barracks. I went to the Hamburg barracks, while my grandmother went to the Dresden barracks. During the war years in Trebic living conditions hadn't been rosy, but a person could always bathe and have some sort of privacy, while in Terezin it was terrible. As time passed and we got to Auschwitz, Terezin seemed like Mecca.

We young ones were lucky in that we could work. At first they employed me in the laundry, where I worked with a friend of my father's, Mrs. Goldman. I worked there for about three quarters of a year. After that came work in the fields and gardening. While doing this work in Terezin I got into the Zionist association Irgun Dalet. Life was easier when you belonged to some sort of social circle. With the passage of time the association ceased to exist, because the transports that were constantly leaving Terezin completely wiped Irgun Dalet out. Most of the people that belonged to this association, naturally those that survived, emigrated to Palestine after the war.

My last job in the ghetto was helping out in the bakery. It was extremely hard physical work. On the other hand, I have to say, though it may sound stupid, that I always tried to work somewhere where it was possible to steal something. Though the fact that 'Thou shalt not steal' is one of God's commandments, stealing food was a question of life or death. In the ghetto my friend Janecek was in the function of staff captain. You could say that in his function he was practically on the same level as the Germans. Once he brought his mother five radishes. They found out about it and immediately punished him. In the ghetto a person did things that he would have condemned in normal daily life. The luckiest though were those that managed to get work outside of the Terezin ghetto gates.

In Terezin I also met my aunt Erna Durnheim, my father's sister with her husband, who unfortunately died there. Life in Terezin was very cruel for old people. Most of them didn't know how to get to anything, mainly to food, where to find it.

When we came to Terezin, we weren't allowed to move about freely, as there were still non-Jews living there. In the year 1943 there were no more Aryans in the ghetto, so we could then freely move about. After work I would always run to visit my grandma in the Dresden barracks, because I was in the Hamburg barracks and my brother in L 417. That was a youth home - Jugendheim, where there were only boys. After the original inhabitants left and there were free houses, we got into L 316 thanks to connections. There were 16 of us girls in one room. We had double bunk beds. There were a larger number of rooms. We were lucky, because there was also a bathroom in the house. In 1943 there were an awful lot of fleas and bedbugs in the ghetto. There were so many of them that we couldn't even sleep, we had to drag our mattresses out on the terrace, and slept there. A group of men, called Entwesung [German for 'disinfestation'], would gas the houses. It was done in stages, at that time we had to move out. The cause of the epidemic was overcrowding and insufficient hygiene. After all, they were old houses. There was also a large percentage of old people living there, those I felt the most sorry for. Their buildings were the most disease- ridden.

There were very dedicated doctors in the ghetto. They had a minimum of medicines at their disposal, but tried to do the best they could. Dr. Hans Schaffa was a very selfless person. He was born in Mikulov. Before the war he worked as a pediatrician in a Brno hospital. He was transported to Terezin on the first AW transport in May 1942. In Terezin, despite great obstacles and difficulties he established a children's hospital in one of the buildings, including a tuberculosis ward. It wasn't anything big, but in that time and place it was a miracle! He helped many children, unfortunately most of them, just like the hospital employees, died. Funerals in Terezin weren't carried out in any traditional way, there were carts drawn by people that would come along the street. The dead bodies would be placed on them. Later a crematorium was built. When a lot of ashes built up they would be dumped into the Odra River. Nowadays there is a large cemetery on that spot.

Terezin's self-government was a big plus. Cultural life in Terezin became an unforgettable experience for me. I remember the conductor Rafael Schaechter, who was from Brno. He managed to organize a beautiful concert. His concerts weren't officially allowed in the ghetto, but for people that loved music it was balsam for the soul. His last concert in Terezin was Mozart's Requiem. I will never forget this performance of Mozart's work, even though I've heard it several times since the end of the war. When the performance was near, and the compositions were learned, often the musicians were designated for transport. There were always talents to work with to be found. I heard the Requiem there, and the Bartered Bride [opera by Bedrich Smetana], sung by a world-famous soprano from Hamburg. The musicians had to interrupt their career while still young. I had the opportunity to hear Gideon Klein sing, and then Vava [Vlasta] Schonova, later she changed her name to Sanova. She used to live in Haifa. As an actress she had no success in any Israeli theater. So she started working in radio. After the war we met twice. The first time was in May 1965: we were on a beautiful trip in Bet She'an together. Towards the end of her life she suffered from cancer. From Haifa she moved to Jerusalem to be with her daughter, an Orthodox Jewess. She died a few years ago in Israel. That cultural life helped us. For the young there were various educational activities and lectures. A whole lot was done for us, the young people, in terms of education and various lectures.

Education wasn't formally taken care of. The little that was done for young people had to be done on the sly. We were taught by university professors. They did a great service; even so they put them on the transports. I remember Willy Groag, who came from Prostejov. [Groag, Willy (b. 1914): Czech painter, doctorate in Chemistry. He started drawing in Theresienstadt, where he taught the children. Groag emigrated to the Kibbutz Maanit in 1945. He worked in agriculture, art was his hobby. Later he worked in painting and silk-screen printing. He first exhibited at age 77.] In Terezin he founded a home for young girls. He was constantly fighting dissolution and illiteracy, despite having to do most things on the sly. He survived the war in Terezin together with his wife Madla. After the liberation they emigrated to Palestine. Madla was one of the first victims of polio that broke out in Israel in the 1950s. Groag married again. He had a daughter from his first marriage and a daughter and son from the second. He lived in the Maanit kibbutz, where he built a factory, what kind I don't remember. He was and still is a person respected everywhere where his former wards live. Later on he established a fund for university studies that bears his name.

I was in Terezin from 22nd May 1942 until 16th October 1944. I was in transport AW-546. We traveled under horrible conditions, I don't remember any more for how many days we traveled there. In Auschwitz they gave me the number JR 1143. Our transports, though we didn't know it at the time, were liquidation transports of 2,000. October transports weren't tattooed, because the Germans didn't have the time any more. On the ramp we met a Slovak transport. There I ran into my cousin from Bratislava. She had her son Petrik with her, who was about four or five. They sent them straight to the gas chamber; the same happened to my brother. There were soldiers standing on the ramp, and they were sending us either to the right or to the left. With the wave of a hand we were fated for either life or death. But even life wasn't worth a whole lot. There were masses of people there, there were 200 of us just from Trebic alone, but at the same time there were 1,000 and 2,000-person transports arriving. We mixed in with Slovak and Hungarian transports. Before we knew what was happening, our family was scattered among them. When mothers didn't want to give up their children, they went with them to the gas chamber.

Those of us that were sent to the other side had to strip naked. We stood in a large hall where they looked us over again to see what we looked like. I guess I was in such shock that it didn't seem at all strange to me to be standing there naked. They herded us into showers; at that time we didn't yet know that we could have been gassed, we didn't learn that until later. We received these awful rags and wooden shoes; they didn't care if they fit us or not. And so we became people with less value than your average dog. Then they shaved us all, one group shaved our heads, another our armpits, yet another our genitals. Then they herded us all into the showers again, and back out, wet. At that time it was already cold out, because it was October. I got a skirt so short that my butt stuck out of it. I tore the lining out of the skirt and three of us made headscarves out of it. It was a flowered skirt, and the wooden shoes on top of that, well, we looked like Gypsies.

I was in Auschwitz for six weeks, and then some of us were picked for work in Kurzbach. Kurzbach is in Silesia, I found that out later when I was in Israel, because there they've got everything precisely mapped out. It was a small village. There they herded us onto a farm. In the middle of the farmyard there was a pump: when we saw it we all immediately went over to it and washed ourselves. I didn't matter at all to us that it was cold out. Then they herded us into a hayloft, where there were three-story bunk beds. Each one of us got her own blanket. Two of us would always huddle together and cover ourselves with two blankets so we would be warmer. At that time I looked so horrible that the camp commander felt sorry for me. He got me stockings and socks, and so I was a bit more warmly dressed. He was a very decent man, and despite the bad conditions he would always try to make sure that in the evening we got hot soup, hot coffee with a piece of bread weighing about 20 - 25 grams, jam or margarine. The SS women in the camp were horrible beasts; the men were all right.

In Kurzbach we worked in the forest. Each time two women would get two tree trunks to carry. One was put on each shoulder, and we would then walk back. We would go twice a day. We also dug roads for tanks. It was work just for the sake of working, despite this it was extremely hard. We had no time to rest; they were always chasing us off somewhere. We dug up tree roots in the forest for the army, because they were laying underground telephone lines. At that time I was so exhausted that I fainted; my friends worked at reviving me until I was finally back on my feet. I was lucky that they didn't shoot me: we had a guard there that loved to shoot. That was the first and last time that I fainted. The work seemed to be endless, maybe it wasn't, maybe it just seemed that way, at that time we were basically useless.

On 23rd January 23, 1945, on the day of my 19th birthday, I got a wonderful gift. They sent us out of Kurzbach on a death march; of course we didn't know at the time that it would later be known by this name. What an unforgettable birthday gift! There was a lot of snow and it was very cold. The first night they herded us into a hayloft in a village named Wohlau. The Germans were driving us all the way to Gross-Rosen camp 14. They marched along with us, also on foot, but at least they could stop, have a bite to eat, and were warmly dressed. We got nothing. Well, there, amidst a lot of shouting they forced us to strip naked outside. They herded us into showers and then back out into the cold and gave us lice-ridden dresses. To this day I'm amazed how we managed to survive all of those horrors, but a person had that sporting spirit. And despite difficulties we managed to keep ourselves relatively clean.

The other girls' hair hadn't grown back yet. I always had a lot of hair which grew quickly. When they gave us those lice-ridden rags, that was the end. We saw boys that we knew from Terezin;

they were driving those poor wretches further onwards. The next day they loaded us into open rail wagons. They were so crowded that we couldn't even stand on both feet. First they transported us to Weimar. They wanted to put us into Buchenwald 15, but it was already overflowing. We remained standing at the train station. It was a beautiful winter's day, the sun was shining. At noon they started to bomb Weimar. A few bombs also fell on the train station. The English didn't know that all those prisoners were standing there at the station. Our locomotive got hit. Pieces fell into our wagon as well, we had some casualties. We were so deadened that we laid the corpses in a pile and could finally sit down in that overcrowded wagon. I and my girlfriend Liza were lucky. We had met in Terezin; she had been a teacher at the youth home. She was talented, already then she could speak French and English perfectly. We put the dead into one pile and then could sit down. During the trip we got nothing to eat or drink.

Then we just continued on and on. We came to some sort of small station. There, amid a lot of shouting, we had to get off the train. Later we learned that it was Bergen-Belsen and that we were somewhere near Hanover. That camp was the worst of all, true hell. This was already in February 1945, and there they were all like beasts, mainly the SS women, they were horrible. There we had nothing: there was no water, no food. We were exhausted, we slept on just a bare concrete floor, and to top it all off one Polish woman stole my wooden shoes. There was no hygiene, diseases spread, and horrible runs. I also got infected. Thanks to the girls and mainly Liza I survived, because there was always someone worse off and someone better off. We dragged each other to roll calls, and when they counted us from the front, then they held me from the back, and conversely, when they counted us from the back, then they held me from the front. One day some girls from Hamburg arrived, they had been on cleanup details. When the front started to draw near they herded them off to Belsen. They weren't as badly off as we were, at that time they gave me a spoonful of sugar.

They liberated us at the last moment, it was 12th May 1945. The soldiers carried me out as one of the dead. I'll never forget how I frightened those young men when I piped up that I was alive. They carried me off to the field hospital. I always said to myself: 'My God, what are they going to do, we're so dirty and lice-ridden.' In those days there was the miracle of DDT powder, they covered us in it, and truly even deloused us. We got clean nightshirts. They put us up in German barracks. Those of us that were very badly off were actually lucky, because those who weren't quite so sick ate meat and canned food and that was the end of them. I know that it's rude, but it was said that they 'shat themselves to death'. I couldn't even walk; I weighed about 34 kilos. It was strange to see Germans, how they were suddenly submissive and small, and how they had to carry water. Many of them were also killed, as people who still had the strength to do it lynched them. I wasn't vindictive: I can't even kill a chicken, let alone a person.

Next there came a Red Cross program where each country took in prisoners for recuperation. About 10,000 Czechs were taken to Sweden. First a hospital train took us to Lubeck, and there they transferred us onto a Swedish Red Cross ship. It was a major act of bravery, as the whole sea was still mined. We went to Stockholm by ship, from there they took us to Sigtuna. During the school year Sigtuna was full of high-school students. In a large central building there was a gymnasium, we lived in small multi- story three-room houses. After reconvalescence they took us to Ritzbrunn-Ryd, which was between Malmo and Goteborg. It's a small spa in southern Sweden. There we got clothing and five Swedish crowns a week for pocket money. I spent all my money on lemons,

because the first few days I ate only lemons. We had it very good there. In October 1945 the first repatriation transport arrived. I decided to go home, after all, what if my mother was alive? I had three cousins in Israel, two boys and a girl, who wanted me to come and stay with them. I actually wanted to, but first I returned to Trebic. About eighty of us went home on the first transport. We arrived in Lubeck. Of course our officers had nothing ready for us. They stuck us in a Serbian camp, everyone was drunk. The English declared that we couldn't stay there and took us in. They took very good care of us, we went to concerts and out dancing, that was the first time in my life that I had danced. After four or five days we were able to continue on to Prague. There I had an uncle, his wife was an Aryan. They lived in Smichov, so they were there waiting for me. I stayed with them for only a few days. Then I returned to Trebic.

I had different plans, reality was also different. I expected that I would get the house and store back and that I would sell it, or rent it out. I wanted to attend school and wanted to go to Israel. All of my friends were there, and my cousins. But it all ended up differently. I didn't get the house back. They gave me the store back in March or April. One morning about two months later I opened up an official gazette and there it was: 'The company Hermann Glaser has been nationalized retroactively to February 1948'. Soon after the property manager showed up as well, I think his name was Kadanka. Earlier he had been a big member of the People's Party and in February he had changed into a big communist. He was a capable person, but acted repugnantly. There were also those that managed to get their property back because they had loyal employees. Our Mrs. Krista was very capable and hard-working, but not loyal.

Post-war

There were a few people that helped me after the war. One lady came to see me and said: 'Herticka, come over, we've got your duvets'. It seems that my grandma had ordered new feather duvets - for my brother and for me. And so after the war I had two duvets and four pillows: in those days that was big property. Our neighbor was a pious Catholic. He had hidden away a lot of our things, among them also our prayer books The Five Books of Moses, Machzor, tallit and tefillin. As I told you earlier: After the war he defended the fact that he had to burn the History of the Czech Nation because he was afraid of the Gestapo. But he didn't touch the prayer books because he was such a deeply religious Catholic. There were decent people, but there were also hyenas among them.

Before I got married, I lived with our neighbor in Zamosti. I couldn't stay there long because they only had one room and a kitchen. At that time I got an offer from Mr. Neuman, who had also returned, to take care of his house while he was in Prague. It was a large house with a beautiful bathroom. I had a small room with a separate entrance. I took care of it, and when it was being painted, I also cleaned the whole place. When they returned to Trebic, his wife ungraciously threw me out. The reason she gave me was that she wanted to move her parents in. At that time I was already going out with Karl - my future husband - and he slept over there once in a while.

If it hadn't been for my friend Lucy we would have both ended up on the street. They had a beautiful tailor's workshop and let us use part of it. My husband divided the workshop with a partition. This created a large room. When Janka [Jana Kubikova, nee Coufalova] was born, she slept in a baby blanket. It was an adventure. The toilet was at the other end of the courtyard. We had to go down a spiral staircase, through a long hallway and across the courtyard to get to it.

Today I would barely make it there. A person was young then, and told himself that he had to get through it. That was also one of the reasons we left Trebic. Karel couldn't find work, partly also because of me, because I was a 'capitalist', even though I had nothing. And so in 1949 we picked up and left for Sumperk.

When I returned after the war, no one cared that I had no place to stay. A clerk at the town hall told me that I should change my name, because Glasner sounds Jewish. I answered why should I change my name if Gottwald can be named Gottwald and Fierlinger be named Fierlinger? My parents never shamed our name, they always paid their taxes. I hope that I'll never do anything to cast our name into disrepute either. I think that after the war it was worse than before, because some people had property fall into their lap. Everyone managed to tear off a piece for himself. When you walk around Trebic today, just imagine that the entire main square, especially the lower square, those were all Jewish houses. No one talks about that today.

I very much wanted to leave for Israel, but I got married. My husband was a Catholic, and didn't have any interest in Israel. In 1947 our daughter Jana was born, and everything became complicated. During the aliyah in 1948, I also wanted very much to leave. He said I could go, but our child would stay. So I stayed.

In December 1945 I started working in our store. Four years later we moved to Sumperk. At first I devoted myself to bringing up my firstborn daughter, and later I found a job, for six months, in a furniture fabric factory. In the meantime I had two more daughters and I remained at home. After my maternity leave ended I went on to work for twelve years in television. I left my job after a change in management. I didn't like my new boss. Every apprentice had a higher salary than I did. My last employer was the Grand Hotel in Sumperk. At first I worked as a receptionist and eventually became the reception manager. I very much enjoyed my work. One had the chance to meet interesting people. We had many clients, because there was a lot of industry in the region - wood, paper and metallurgy. There were the Rapotin glass works, and a paper mill in Velke Glosiny where they manufacture handmade paper to this day.

I never joined any political party because I'm not a submissive person and I don't like only one line of thought and respect the opinions of others. I never held a person's political opinion against him. I don't understand people who in the name of ideology gave up their family, studies, even their life. Many people lost their lives in the name of ideology, for example Slansky 16 and Sverma 17. The Slansky trial 18 was manipulated, that was known even then. Only now do people talk about it openly, but that won't bring those people back to life. People are short- sighted and forgetful. Although today you can go to the store and find everything, first you have to look and see what you've got in your pocket. It's human nature to want to have everything, but we've all got different abilities.

During the events of 1968 [see Prague Spring] 19 we were at our cottage. At night I awoke to the sound of airplanes above us. My husband said to me that it was probably the Russians on maneuvers. Well, they weren't just maneuvering. Polish soldiers came to our region, they were everywhere. At that time there were about a thousand Russians there. Those boys were wretches; they lived in horrible conditions and were beaten. Their pay was seven crowns per day, when they couldn't stand it any longer they would of course run away. They left behind a devastated environment. Of course people were glad that they were gone, and now they reminisce about the

good old days. They don't realize that we had to pay for all those advantages ourselves.

Neither I nor my husband were ever members of any socialist organization. We were only passive members of the ROH 20. We didn't go on recreation trips with them. My husband worked in the sawmills in Northern Moravia via which they used to be organized. I had to put up with them all year, and then on top of that to have to go on vacation with them, that was out of the question. When we didn't have money for a vacation, we would go camping on pastures by the reservoir.

At work I never hid the fact that I was Jewish. When I working at the Grand [Hotel Grand], that might have been the 1980s by then, we had this one trainee. One day she came to me and asked if she could ask me something. She had heard that supposedly I was Jewish. I answered that yes, I was. She looked at me and said: 'You're just like rest of us.' And what do you think, that we climb trees like monkeys, and that each one of us has to have some sort of nose? She was a pleasant, clever girl from Prague. People are prejudiced against foreign ethnicities. Today a similar problem exists with Gypsies. Those people can't help the fact that they live so poorly, there are some among them that are starting to make their way up. But that isn't only the first generation, because even their grandparents had to be civilized. When they come from Romania, from Slovakia, they don't know how to use the WC and that there's such a thing as running water. That's nature, when we don't know something, we destroy it. It's a mistake to leave it be, it's also a ghetto. First people fought to open the ghetto, then to close it.

My husband, Karel Coufal, was born in 1926. He was from Trebic. We had already known each other in public school. After the war, food coupons were given out once a month, and he was in charge of this. Because I'm very disorganized, it would regularly happen that I wouldn't pick up my coupons until I had no food left at home. However, it was necessary to also bring along your identification, which I had of course misplaced somewhere. So that's how we met, at the food coupon distribution window. Soon we started dating. We had common interests and friends. A person needed to have something in common with the other.

We were married on 30th August 1947 at the Trebic city hall. I had a light blue wedding dress with short sleeves. We were both absent-minded and so we forgot about the bouquet. At the last moment I had one made by Mr. Pavlik so that my mother's friends wouldn't say 'that Coufal didn't even give her a bouquet'. As a wedding gift we got a basketful of pastries. The wedding banquet menu was very simple - chicken with new potatoes and cucumber salad. In the end all of our friends and acquaintances showed up and what we had planned as a small wedding turned into a big feast. Before the wedding Karel had had a goodbye party and for a long time had the feeling that his 'yes' wasn't pure.

I've never had a good relationship with my mother-in-law Leopolda and my sister-in-law Slavka, because they didn't like the fact that I'm Jewish. When our oldest daughter Janka was born, she rather left for Slovakia. That's why our children didn't go visit them during summer vacation. We only met at Easter and during summer vacation. In those days we used to go to our cottage in Trebic for longer periods of time. Grandmother never babysat the children.

Karel attended an industrial technical high school in Sumperk. He was always ambitious. He studied to be a machine operator, electrician, auto- mechanic and projectionist. In his old age he finished a welding course at the Slovak Technical University in Bratislava. He worked his whole life in the Northern Moravian sawmills as chief of mechanization.

In Sumperk we used to live across from the city hall. I was an old three- bedroom apartment, so it had high 3.2 meter ceilings and the rooms were 7.5 x 5.5 meters. It was always quite lively, because during summer vacation we had up to eight children at our place. They used to ride their tricycles in our front hall; once in a while they broke something. There was no shortage of injuries, I remember how once my daughter Helena [Mikulova, nee Coufalova] flew through a glass door and smashed her knee. After my husband's death I moved into a small two-bedroom apartment in the center of town. The bus and train station were nearby, as well as a health clinic. My husband and I had never had any inclination towards amassing property. We had a car, a cottage in Kuty, children and grandchildren.

I didn't bring up my children in the Jewish faith. When they were small, they didn't even know that I was Jewish. They only knew that was going to Brno, or that I was going to Prague for a Terezin reunion. Now that they are older, they're quite interested in it, they read the magazine Rosh Chodesh and the Jewish almanac. I tried to bring them up in a tolerant fashion; they weren't brought up in any religion so that they could then freely choose on their own.

We didn't observe Jewish holidays at home, because I lost my desire for keeping traditions. At Christmas my husband would decorate the tree. We had a festive supper and the children got gifts. We would spend Easter by the river in Trebic. Of course we would paint Easter eggs and on Easter Monday our children's classmates would come over to visit.

Our friends weren't Jews, because there weren't any Jews of my age in Sumperk or its surroundings. My girlfriends aren't alive any more. Two of them were in Prague and one in Sumperk. We got to know each other through our children. They moved from Most when little Jana was about five. We used to go on walks, to the theatre, and to classical music concerts.

Our oldest daughter, Jana, was born in 1947 in Trebic. She went to elementary school in Sumperk. She studied photography at a secondary school in Brno. After graduation she got a job in a metallurgical research institute and worked there until her retirement. She married twice. The children were like real siblings. Lenka has her own apartment and lives there with her son David who was born in 2003. Martin lives in Zlin, his wife is named Renata. They have a seven year old son, Honzik [Honza, Jan - Honza is a less formal version of the name Jan. It comes from the German name Hans, short for the German equivalent to Jan, Johannes].

Jitka was born in the year 1951. She is twice happily divorced and childless. Jitka graduated from library science at secondary school. She has her own bookstore in Sumperk. Currently she also employs my youngest daughter Helen. Helen was born in 1952, and went to mechanical-technical secondary school. Her husband is named Jozef Mikula. They have two children together, Jitka and Jozef. She lives in a house with a garden and has a partial disability pension. Jozef is a carpenter and Jitka a student at police academy.

I was happy when the state of Israel was created in 1948 and was sad that I couldn't go there. People went there out of idealism. They went to work in the fields and there was always a shomer - a guard with a gun - with them. They lived in primitive houses; parents didn't sleep with their children, who lived in special homes. These days they live relatively well. People in kibbutzim don't want to work. Nowadays every kibbutz has affiliated production, because otherwise they wouldn't be able to support themselves. This is partly due to a serious lack of water.

The wars and conflicts in Israel always saddened me. I had relatives and friends there. Now there are already three generations of Glasners there.

I've been to Israel four times, each time I stayed for fourteen days. The first time I went was in the year 1956. I came to a town where they were opening the Terezin Memorial. Five of us from Brno had been invited. It was very difficult for me to get permission to travel. Permits were given out on Hradcanske Namesti [Hradcany Square, in Prague]. I had to go there three times. The civil servants acted like the Gestapo towards us. The man who gave out the permits yelled at everyone. When my turn came, before he could open his mouth to say anything, I piped up first: 'Look here, now tell me whether you do or don't have that permit, but you're not going to yell at me, I'm not being interrogated by the Gestapo here.' He just looked at me and threw me the permit. The flight was Prague - Sofia - Athens. From there we traveled on by boat, stopping at Cyprus and Crete. The memorial opening was on the 22nd and I didn't manage to fly out until the 22nd. I was there for two weeks, and liked it very much. It was beautiful, because in those days there weren't a lot of people going there yet. And when I returned there this year, I didn't even have time to stop and think a bit, because I was carried along by the crowd. I was there again in the year 1985 - 1986 and in 1989.

In Sumperk I didn't get to any underground literature. I had a girlfriend in Prague, Doris Grosdanavicova, whom I had met in Terezin, who always passed on books and magazines to me. I was partial to the Western broadcasts of BBC and our Radio Free Europe 21.

I maintained only written contact with friends and relatives living abroad. In Canada [Montreal] I have a cousin, Emma. When my husband died in 1985, I traveled to Canada for a visit. They [Emma and her husband] paid for my stay, and they would do it again today. I'm the only one in our family that won't let them. For example, Emma saves all year so she can spend the worst winter months in Florida. Once she took me there with her. Since I play neither tennis nor golf, I was terribly bored. The rest of my cousins have already died. But I still keep in touch with their children. There are 21 Glasners living in Israel. The last time, when we had a reunion in Trebic, I played tour guide for them. My feet hurt so much afterwards that I said to myself, 'never again'.

I welcomed the fall of the Communist regime with great joy, but I didn't go jingling my keys [during the Velvet Revolution 22 people symbolically expressed their dissatisfaction with the Communist regime by jingling their keys during demonstrations]. I sat and listened to the radio. In my opinion, it's going to take a few years until people get used to democracy. It's necessary for some generations to die out, mainly mine. Our lives didn't change and stayed in a rut. Jitka has her own bookstore. Right now the new supermarkets are big competition for her, because people need bread for life, not books. Luckily she manages to make a living and also employs her sister [Helena].

In Brno I would like to return to Orthodoxy, but that's not possible any more. My generation is dying out; the war destroyed everything for us, mainly the conservation of traditions and laws. Though one respects them, one is no longer able to follow them, because when 99 percent of people go through what we went through, faith simply disappears. Maybe from a certain perspective it's a positive thing, it's said that this is a way to preserve Jewry, but it seems to be somewhat forced to me. Most people that are inclined toward Orthodoxy, are like us, original Jews.

I've always been a member of the Jewish community in Brno, and have never been ashamed of it. Similarly I'm also a member of the Terezin Initiative [Foundation] 23, and I receive the Terezin Bulletin in German from Israel. According to my abilities I also contribute to various organizations.

After the year 1989 I got restitution from the state for my parents, which however didn't bring them back to life. I also got something from the Claims Conference. I'm not some sort of capitalist, and don't know how to manage money. I divided everything up among the girls. Lenka has David now, so I'm not worried about the currency dropping.

Glossary

1 Terezin/Theresienstadt

A ghetto in the Czech Republic, run by the SS. Jews were transferred from there to various extermination camps. It was used to camouflage the extermination of European Jews by the Nazis, who presented Theresienstadt as a 'model Jewish settlement'. Czech gendarmes served as ghetto guards, and with their help the Jews were able to maintain contact with the outside world. Although education was prohibited, regular classes were held, clandestinely. Thanks to the large number of artists, writers, and scholars in the ghetto, there was an intensive program of cultural activities. At the end of 1943, when word spread of what was happening in the Nazi camps, the Germans decided to allow an International Red Cross investigation committee to visit Theresienstadt. In preparation, more prisoners were deported to Auschwitz, in order to reduce congestion in the ghetto. Dummy stores, a cafe, a bank, kindergartens, a school, and flower gardens were put up to deceive the committee.

2 Orthodox communities

The traditionalist Jewish communities founded their own Orthodox organizations after the Universal Meeting in 1868- 1869.They organized their life according to Judaist principles and opposed to assimilative aspirations. The community leaders were the rabbis. The statute of their communities was sanctioned by the king in 1871. In the western part of Hungary the communities of the German and Slovakian immigrants' descendants were formed according to the Western Orthodox principles. At the same time in the East, among the Jews of Galician origins the 'eastern' type of Orthodoxy was formed; there the Hassidism prevailed. In time the Western Orthodoxy also spread over to the eastern part of Hungary. 294 Orthodox mother-communities and 1,001 subsidiary communities were registered all over Hungary, mainly in Transylvania and in the north-eastern part of the country, in 1896. In 1930 30,4 % of Hungarian Jews belonged to 136 mother-communities and 300 subsidiary communities. This number increased to 535 Orthodox communities in 1944, including 242,059 believers (46 %).

3 Anti-Jewish laws in the Protectorate of Bohemia-Moravia

After the Germans occupied Bohemia and Moravia, anti-Jewish legislation was gradually introduced. Jews were not allowed to enter public places, such as parks, theatres, cinemas, libraries, swimming pools, etc. They were excluded from all kinds of professional associations and could not be civil servants. They were not allowed to attend German or Czech schools, and later private lessons were forbidden, too. They were not allowed to leave their houses after 8pm. Their shopping hours were

limited to 3 to 5pm. They were only allowed to travel in special sections of public transportation. They had their telephones and radios confiscated. They were not allowed to change their place of residence without permission. In 1941 they were ordered to wear the yellow badge.

4 Subcarpathia (also known as Ruthenia, Russian and Ukrainian name Zakarpatie)
Region situated on the border of the Carpathian Mountains with the Middle Danube lowland. The regional capitals are Uzhhorod, Berehovo, Mukachevo, Khust. It belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy until World War I; and the Saint-Germain convention declared its annexation to Czechoslovakia in 1919. It is impossible to give exact historical statistics of the language and ethnic groups living in this geographical unit: the largest groups in the interwar period were Hungarians, Rusyns, Russians, Ukrainians, Czech and Slovaks. In addition there was also a considerable Jewish and Gypsy population. In accordance with the first Vienna Decision of 1938, the area of Subcarpathia mainly inhabited by Hungarians was ceded to Hungary. The rest of the region was proclaimed a new state called Carpathian Ukraine in 1939, with Khust as its capital, but it only existed for four and a half months, and was occupied by Hungary in March 1939. Subcarpathia was taken over by Soviet troops and local guerrillas in 1944. In 1945, Czechoslovakia ceded the area to the USSR and it gained the name Carpatho-Ukraine. The region became part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1945. When Ukraine became independent in 1991, the region became an administrative region under the name of Transcarpathia.

5 Lidove Noviny (The People's News)
The oldest of current Czech newspapers. It was founded at the end of 1893 by lawyer Adolf Stransky in Brno. Before WWII Lidove Noviny became a modern daily of the Czech democratic intelligentsia. Later free-thinking journalists were forced out by the Nazi protectors, later by Communist authorities. In 1959 its publication was stopped. The first attempt at resurrection in 1968 was halted by the Soviet intervention. Re-registration of this highly regarded publication took place in 1990.

6 Prager Tagblatt
German-language daily that was established in 1875 and was the largest Austro-Hungarian daily paper outside Vienna and the most widely read German-language paper in Bohemia. During the time of the First Republic (Czechoslovakia - CSR) the 'Prager Tagblatt' had a number of Jewish journalists and many Jewish authors as contributors: Max Brod, Willy Haas, Rudolf Fuchs, E. E. Kisch, Theodor Lessing and others. The last issue came out in March 1939, during World War II the paper's offices in Panska Street in Prague were used by the daily 'Der neue Tag', after the war the building and printing plant was taken over by the Czech daily 'Mlada Fronta'.

7 Sokol
One of the best-known Czech sports organizations. It was founded in 1862 as the first physical educational organization in the Austro- Hungarian Monarchy. Besides regular training of all age groups, units organized sports competitions, colorful gymnastics rallies, cultural events including drama, literature and music, excursions and youth camps. Although its main goal had always been the promotion of national health and sports, Sokol also played a key role in the national resistance

to the Austro- Hungarian Empire, the Nazi occupation and the communist regime. Sokol flourished between the two World Wars; its membership grew to over a million. Important statesmen, including the first two presidents of interwar Czechoslovakia, Tomas Masaryk and Edvard Benes, were members of Sokol. Sokol was banned three times: during World War I, during the Nazi occupation and finally by the communists after 1948, but branches of the organization continued to exist abroad. Sokol was restored in 1990.

8 Czech Scout Movement

The first Czech scout group was founded in 1911. In 1919 a number of separate scout organizations fused to form the Junak Association, into which all scout organizations of the Czechoslovak Republic were merged in 1938. In 1940 the movement was liquidated by a decree of the State Secretary. After WWII the movement revived briefly until it was finally dissolved in 1950. The Junak Association emerged again in 1968 and was liquidated in 1970. It was reestablished after the Velvet Revolution of 1989.

9 Municipal school

a type of elementary school before the year 1945, where children received a basic education. It was established and funded by the municipality. Besides municipal schools there were also church schools. The pay of teachers in both types of schools was subsidized by the state. After the year 1945 all types of schools were nationalized

10 Council school

a part of the educational system before 1945. This higher type of school was created according to statute XXVL/1893. A condition of study in council schools was completion of 4 grades of elementary (municipal) school. The school could be founded by the state, but also by towns.

11 Exclusion of Jews from schools in the Protectorate

The Ministry of Education of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia sent round a ministerial decree in 1940, which stated that from school year 1940/41 Jewish pupils were not allowed to visit Czech public and private schools and those who were already in school should be excluded. After 1942 Jews were not allowed to visit Jewish schools or courses organised by the Jewish communities either.

12 Ravensbruck

Concentration camp for women near Furstenberg, Germany. Five hundred prisoners transported there from Sachsenhausen began construction at the end of 1938. They built 14 barracks and service buildings, as well as a small camp for men, which was completed separated from the women's camp. The buildings were surrounded by tall walls and electrified barbed wire. The first deportees, some 900 German and Austrian women were transported there on May 18, 1939, soon followed by 400 Austrian Gypsy women. At the end of 1939, due to the new groups constantly arriving, the camp held nearly 3000 persons. With the expansion of the war, people from twenty countries were taken here. Persons incapable of working were transported on to Uckermark or

Auschwitz, and sent to the gas chambers, others were murdered during 'medical' experiments. By the end of 1942, the camp reached 15,000 prisoners, by 1943, with the arrival of groups from the Soviet Union, it reached 42,000. During the working existance of the camp, altogether nearly 132,000 women and children were transported here, of these, 92,000 were murdered. In March of 1945, the SS decided to move the camp, so in April those capable of walking were deported on a death march. On April 30, 1945, those who survived the camp and death march, were liberated by the Soviet armies.

13 Judenfrei (Judenrein)

German for 'free (purified) of Jews'. The term created by the Nazis in Germany in connection with the plan entitled 'the Final Solution to the Jewish Question', the aim of which was defined as 'the creation of a Europe free of Jews'. The term 'Judenrein'/'Judenfrei' in Nazi terminology referred to the extermination of the Jews and described an area (a town or a region), from which the entire Jewish population had been deported to extermination camps or forced labor camps. The term was, particularly in occupied Poland, an established part of the official and unofficial Nazi language.

14 Gross-Rosen camp

The Gross-Rosen camp was set up in August 1940, as a branch of Sachsenhausen; the inmates were forced to work in the local granite quarry. The first transport arrived at Gross-Rosen on 2nd August 1940. The initial labor camp acquired the status of an independent concentration camp on 1 May 1941. Gross-Rosen was significantly developed in 1944, the character of the camp also changed; numerous branches (approx. 100) were created alongside the Gross-Rosen headquarters, mostly in the area of Lower Silesia, the Sudeten Mountains and Ziemia Lubuska. A total of approximately 125,000 inmates passed through Gross-Rosen (through the headquarters and the branches) including unregistered prisoners; some prisoners were brought to the camp only to be executed (e.g. 2,500 Soviet prisoners of war). Jews (citizens of different European countries), Poles and citizens of the former Soviet Union were among the most numerous ethnic groups in the camp. The death toll of Gross-Rosen is estimated at approximately 40,000.

15 Buchenwald

Nazi concentration camp operating from March 1937 until April 1945 in Germany, near Weimar. It was divided into 136 wards; inmates were forced to labor in the armaments industry, quarries; approx. 56,000 thousand of the 238,000 inmates, representing many nationalities, died. An uprising of the prisoners broke out shortly before liberation, on 11 April 1945.

16 Slansky, Rudolf (1901-1952)

Czech politician, member of the Communist Party from 1921 and Secretary-General of the Czechoslovak Communist Party from 1945-1951. After World War II he was one of the leaders of the totalitarian regime. Arrested on false charges he was sentenced to death in the so-called Slansky trial in November 1952 and hanged.

17 Sverma, Jan (1901-1944)

Czechoslovak communist politician and journalist, leader of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (KSC). During the years 1939-1940 he led the international bureau of the KSC in Paris. After France's defeat he left for the Soviet Union. During the Slovak national uprising he was sent to Slovakia in September 1944 as the representative of the KSC leadership in Moscow. After the rebels' retreat he died during the crossing of the Chabenec mountain on November 10, 1944.

18 Slansky Trial

Communist show trial named after its most prominent victim, Rudolf Slansky. It was the most spectacular among show trials against communists with a wartime connection with the West, veterans of the Spanish Civil War, Jews, and Slovak 'bourgeois nationalists'. In November 1952 Slansky and 13 other prominent communist personalities, 11 of whom were Jewish, including Slansky, were brought to trial. The trial was given great publicity; they were accused of being Trotskyst, Titoist, Zionist, bourgeois, nationalist traitors, and in the service of American imperialism. Slansky was executed, and many others were sentenced to death or to forced labor in prison camps.

19 Prague Spring

The term Prague Spring designates the liberalization period in communist-ruled Czechoslovakia between 1967-1969. In 1967 Alexander Dubcek became the head of the Czech Communist Party and promoted ideas of 'socialism with a human face', i.e. with more personal freedom and freedom of the press, and the rehabilitation of victims of Stalinism. In August 1968 Soviet troops, along with contingents from Poland, East Germany, Hungary and Bulgaria, occupied Prague and put an end to the reforms.

20 ROH

the Revolutionary Unionist Movement (ROH) was born in 1945. It represented the interests of the working class and working intelligentsia before employers in the former Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. Among the tasks of the ROH were the signing of collective agreements with employers and arranging recreation for adults and children. In the years 1968-69 some leading members of the organization attempted to promote the idea of 'unions without communists' and of the ROH as an opponent of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (KSC). With the coming to power of the new communist leadership in 1969 the reformers were purged from their positions, both in the ROH and in their job functions. After the Velvet Revolution the ROH was transformed into the Federation of Trade Unions in Slovakia (KOZ) and similarly on the Czech side (KOS).

21 Radio Free Europe

Radio station launched in 1949 at the instigation of the US government with headquarters in West Germany. The radio broadcast uncensored news and features, produced by Central and Eastern European émigrés, from Munich to countries of the Soviet block. The radio station was jammed behind the Iron Curtain, team members were constantly harassed and several people were killed in terrorist attacks by the KGB. Radio Free Europe played a role in supporting dissident groups, inner resistance and will of freedom in the Eastern and Central European communist countries and thus it contributed to the downfall of the totalitarian regimes of the Soviet block. The headquarters of

the radio have been in Prague since 1994.

22 Velvet Revolution

Also known as November Events, this term is used for the period between 17th November and 29th December 1989, which resulted in the downfall of the Czechoslovak communist regime. The Velvet Revolution started with student demonstrations, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the student demonstration against the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia. Brutal police intervention stirred up public unrest, mass demonstrations took place in Prague, Bratislava and other towns, and a general strike began on 27th November. The Civic Forum demanded the resignation of the communist government. Due to the general strike Prime Minister Ladislav Adamec was finally forced to hold talks with the Civic Forum and agreed to form a new coalition government. On 29th December democratic elections were held, and Vaclav Havel was elected President of Czechoslovakia.

23 Terezin Initiative Foundation (Nadace Terezinska iniciativa)

Founded in 1993 by the International Association of Former Prisoners of the Terezin/Theresienstadt Ghetto, it is a special institute devoted to the scientific research on the history of Terezin and of the 'Final Solution' of the Jewish question in the Czech lands. At the end of 1998 it was renamed to Terezin Initiative Institute (Institut Terezinske iniciativy).