Martin Glas

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Mr. Martin Glas spent part of his childhood in Terezin 1. As he says, he himself didn't experience anything terrible, but despite this, he describes those years as the most horrible in his life. He is not only thankful for having survived the war, but also feels a deep responsibility towards his friends that didn't have such luck. Thus, when I approached him as to whether he wouldn't tell me something about his life, he didn't have to be asked twice and began a long, long story... He was an excellent interview subject. Not only was his approach that he must convey as much as possible, but thanks to his having an excellent memory, he also enriched the story with minute details. And because he is an immensely perceptive person, who what's more isn't afraid of talking about his feelings, a very human story came to be...

Remembering my childhood

I have to admit that fate has been kind to me. Not only because seventy years ago it allowed me to be born, when at that time my mother had tuberculosis and doctors weren't pleased to see her expecting another child. But mainly because I survived the concentration camp. And finally, also because it made a part of my mental facilities: the feeling that I'm glad to be in this world, that I always need to be looking forward to something, and that I grew up with the notion, as it were, that the meaning of life is to endeavor that as many people as possible around me be glad that I exist, and that our paths in life had crossed.

My life was divided, more or less by force, into several phases. I was born into a German-speaking family from Prague, so my mother tongue was German. When I was supposed to begin attending school, my parents decided that I'd attend a Czech school, because we weren't Germans and

wouldn't continue in increasing the number of German-speaking inhabitants of Prague. We then spoke Czech at home as well. While my father did know Czech spelling and grammar, he had a problem with pronunciation. My mother, on the other hand, learned the language through everyday conversation on the street, and had perfect pronunciation, but made errors in writing until the end of her life.

Back then, when I started Grade 1 and didn't know a single world of English, the head teacher, Mr. Korda, had to translate every word into German for me. At the end of my first year I could already read and write Czech; by the end of Grade 2 I'd forgotten how to speak German, but understood everything a child of around six understands. Then, after the war, I wasn't able to speak any German for a long time; I had a mental block.

That was the first turning point. The second, and perhaps even more fundamental one, were the years spent in Terezin during the war. I didn't go any further, because I had the luck that my mother worked in agriculture, and so protected me against the transports. Despite this, I consider what I lived through there to be the most horrible things in my life, even though I admit that in comparison with other people, actually nothing that terrible happened to me. I constantly have to think about my friends, about the little children I saw in Terezin, who never returned. My father didn't return either...

My family had the luck to be allowed to live in Terezin together for some time. But then first my brother and then my father left, until my mother and I were left alone together. We talked with each other a lot, which of course also continued after the war, which is also why I know quite a bit about my family.

My family background

My father's father was named Rudolf Glas. He was born sometime around 1860 in Prague, but his official home residency was in Hermanuv Mestec. Home residency was a hereditary institution, and when it was cancelled after World War II, we received a document in the mail that my father's home residency had also been in Hermanuv Mestec. Hermanuv Mestec had most likely had a large Jewish ghetto; they've recently reopened the synagogue there, I went there to have a look, but didn't find any names at the local cemetery that would seem to have a connection with our family.

So while my grandfather was from Bohemia, I have no clue whether he spoke Czech, perhaps as a child. Later he spoke German, and most likely probably also Italian. He worked as a bank clerk, and moved to Terst [Trieste] because of work. There he got married and had a son, my father. Sometime around 1905 he returned to Vienna with his family, and soon after that he and his wife were divorced. He then raised my father alone, and was very afraid for him, so he didn't let him attend gym class, which is why my father didn't know how to swim. Right up until World War II, my grandpa lived almost right in the center of Vienna, a little ways away from Beethoven Square.

In 1942 he arrived in Terezin. I remember him as an old person, lying on a bed, and they brought me over to him and said, 'This is your grandpa.' My mother used to tell me that he apparently wasn't quite right in the head anymore, because he would say to my father: 'Julio,' as my father's name was Julian, 'go down to the corner for me and get me a glass of red.' About four years ago, I was in Vienna and was looking for the street where my father lived with Grandpa. Today, probably the same as back then, there's a wine shop on the corner. Maybe that explains why Grandpa used

to ask Father for a glass of red. My father liked to joke around, and so it's possible that Grandpa also liked humor, and in this way wanted to remind my father of the time of his youth in Vienna. But my mother took it that Grandpa wasn't in his right mind anymore, after all, how could someone want something like that in Terezin? My grandfather actually had a very sad life. He died in Terezin in 1942, and I was at his funeral ceremony.

Grandpa Glas had two brothers. One of them worked at the train station in Jihlava as an engineer, and in 1916, when my father went to visit him as a soldier on vacation, he met my mother. This engineer uncle of mine died before the war, then in Terezin his two grandsons, Pavel and Tomas Glas, were in the same 'Heim' ['Kinderheim,' or children's home] with me. My grandpa's other brother was probably younger. I remember him from Terezin as a relatively chipper person; he wasn't too tall, wore a mustache and limped. Before the war he'd been a lawyer, and this is why my father entered law school, so he could take over his practice. But that never happened. That brother of my grandpa's left me a leather cigar case, which I've got to this day, and when - quite rarely - I smoke a cigar, I use it.

My grandmother on my father's side was named Riesa. Her father was named von Reiss, and when he was a little boy, they moved from Hungary to the Italian part of the Austrian monarchy. In Terst he became a rich shipbuilder, but apparently when he was older he became poorer, and lived alone in a large palace with just his Italian wife. They had several children together, and one of the daughters, Bianca, my grandma's sister, married a man named Hercole Gasperini. Apparently they were a very-funny looking couple. While my [great] aunt was statuesque, portly, Hercules was, on the contrary, tiny, petite, and obediently pranced about my aunt - but apparently at home he 'terrorized' the family. When my aunt talked, she was apparently always waving her arms and yelling: 'Mama Mia!' - she was very noisy.

My mother also told me that my grandma had a little niece, who every evening and every morning, when she prayed, ended her prayer with the words: 'E viva la patria a e viva le duce' ['Long live the nation and long live the leader']. You see, this was already when Mussolini 2 was in power, so perhaps in 1932. Grandma Riesa was raised in a convent, and it's even possible that she was christened.

My father [Julian Glas] was born in Terst in 1896. Before the war broke out, this fact was very important for us. Because he was born on Italian territory, though of a no longer existing monarchy, the Americans included him in the Italian quota for moving away, and we had a certain chance to emigrate. Why we didn't succeed in emigrating, that'll come later. From the age of five, when he moved to Vienna with his parents, my father didn't speak Italian, so I think that he quickly forgot the language, but a love for Italian cuisine stayed with him throughout his entire life, especially spaghetti, which we had at home very often.

After moving to Vienna, my grandma and grandpa got divorced. Because my grandpa caught her in flagrante with a certain Mr. Hoffmann, the owner of a real estate agency, who she then married. Because Mr. Hoffmann was an Aryan, this marriage saved her life. But her son didn't survive the war, and my mother told me how Grandma collapsed when she found out that her Julio, her only child, was no longer alive.

My father attended a classical academic high school for eight years, always with straight A's. He was oriented towards the humanities and wrote poems, but didn't publish them. He sang in a choir,

later in Terezin as well, and apparently played the mandolin. On the other hand, he didn't know sports at all - my grandpa was so afraid for him that he didn't allow him to attend gym class. I remember that in water my father used to do all sorts of hijinks, somersaults, but didn't know how to swim - as opposed to my mother, who was an excellent swimmer.

During World War I my father fought on the Eastern Front. He fell into captivity, from which he managed to escape, and on 28th October 1918 he arrived in Vienna - right on the day that Czechoslovakia proclaimed its independence, and the old monarchy was falling apart. Because they were counting on him to take over my uncle's law practice, he began studying law at the university in Vienna. I personally think that that type of work wasn't right for him. Because my father was too upright and honest, which is why I can't imagine him defending all sorts of scoundrels, or on the contrary sullying an honest person. One way or the other, after four semesters my father ended his studies, went into finance, and became a managing clerk at a bank. Not long after, he married my mother, so this is the right place to also say something about her and her origins.

Grandpa Carl Fischer, my mother's father, was born in 1861 in Mlada Boleslav. Grandpa's forebears lived in the ghetto there even after Joseph II [3] allowed Jews to leave the ghetto gates. This branch of our family isn't purely Jewish, because my great-grandfather came about as a result of a Jewish girl being raped by some German soldier. The girl brought a boy into the world, but after giving birth jumped into some water out of desperation and drowned. My great-grandpa was brought up by her sister.

My mother also told me that in the Fischer family it was a custom for cousins to marry. This rule was meant to keep property in the family, but it had very serious consequences in the risk of genetic damage and various illnesses. Grandpa Fischer broke with this tradition when he married Charlotta Kollek, my grandmother, who was from far-away Zdanice na Morave. The marriage was arranged by a so-called shadkhan, or matchmaker. Grandpa Fischer died when I was two, and so all I remember is once visiting, and him sitting by the radio, cutting pieces off a pear and giving them to me.

The Kollek family was relatively wealthy, my great-grandfather supposedly had a leasehold farm and a sugar refinery, and also owned a store. But during World War I he put everything into government loans, and lost his property. He may not even have lived to see the war's end. But his wife, my great-grandmother lived long enough that I also knew her as a small boy in Jihlava. When at the age of 85 she broke her arm, upon examining her, the doctor apparently proclaimed that she was as healthy as a young woman. In my reminiscences she plays the role of the 'kind great-grandma' who gave me candy, even though in reality she was said to be selfish and wouldn't give anyone anything. When in 1938 the Germans arrived in Austria [4], she lost her zest for life and soon upon that died.

Grandma Fischer I remember very well. I used to see her when we'd go to Jihlava to our summer house, and at one time as a small boy I lived with her. She never got a proper education, perhaps only for one year did she have a home tutor with her other siblings, which is why she didn't know how to read and write properly. During the occupation [5] she moved to Prague, and would often come over to visit us. Then she arrived in Terezin, where she stayed until the end. After the war she immigrated to Australia where her two daughters were, and where she died in about 1965.

My mother had three sisters and one brother. The oldest of the sisters, Berta, had two children. She did amateur theater and in 1938 had already immigrated to Australia, where she married a second time. Her sister Heda married a Brno lawyer named Felix Loria, and lived with him and her two children in Brno. Felix Loria was a drawing-room Communist, and when in 1933 Georgi Dimitrov 6 was accused of setting fire to the Reichstag 7, this uncle was supposed to defend him. But because he was a Jew, the Germans didn't let him go to Leipzig. The family immigrated to England and then to Australia, where Uncle Loria started some sort of factory. That's actually a paradox, a Communist, but despite that a factory owner. Be that as it may, his business burned down anyways. After the war he apparently sent my mother a letter of recommendation for Klement Gottwald 8, but she didn't want anything to do with Gottwald, and so burned the letter.

My mother's brother was named Emil. During World War I he lost his left arm, for which he received a medal. Actually, it helped him during the second war, because, though a Jew, he was despite that a war hero, and so in Terezin wasn't allowed to be put on a transport, and stayed there the whole time. Otherwise, with one arm he wouldn't have had any chance of survival. He had a legal education, and before the war he owned a bookshop in Jihlava, after the war he immigrated to Israel, where he died in 1972. My mother used to keep in touch with his two daughters, but I didn't.

Finally, the last, youngest sister was named Greta. For a long time she lived in Jihlava with her parents, then got married and divorced and before the war managed to immigrate to England with her son. If her son Fredy, who was born in 1928, is still alive, I have no clue. He was a tailor - cutter and apparently was a master in his field. Out of all these relatives, I only met Uncle Emil and his two daughters personally. I've never seen any of the others.

Because Grandpa worked as a chief clerk for a sawmill in Dreveny Mlyn near Jihlava, the family was definitely among the more well-off. From today's perspective it's strange, but during the time of my mother's childhood, it wasn't the custom to indulge children. Going for ice cream - that didn't exist. As a child, my mother liked sweet buns. She loved them, but never got them. Which is why when my brother and I were little, she wanted to buy them for us, but we for our part weren't interested in any sweet buns.

My mother's name was Gertruda. She was born in Jihlava in 1896. From birth she had eye problems, one eye was askew and blind, and she saw very poorly out of the other one. She was, however, very intelligent, and not only had she graduated from lyceum, just that being exceptional in a girl's case in those days, but she even absolved four semesters of chemistry at university in Vienna. She told me that during her studies, she much rather spent money on culture instead of food, and got to know and associated with many young, later well-known artists, one name that will speak for all is Josef Schildkraut [(1896-1964): Academy Award-winning Austrian stage and film actor], whom I've seen in the American film 'The Rains Came' [1939]. My mother later got tuberculosis, apparently due to wartime malnutrition.

My parents met in 1916, when my father was a soldier and visiting his uncle in Jihlava while on leave. They were married in 1920, and moved to Prague, because my father's bank opened a branch office there. My father progressed in his career, and worked his way up to the position of managing clerk. My mother was at home, and didn't work, even when she was offered a position in some chemical factory. She would have apparently earned even more than my father, which he, being an old-school type, couldn't allow. And so my mother, out of love for my father, stayed at

home and became a 'kitchen- maid' - as she used to say.

Life in a sublet, where they lived in the beginning, must have been misery for her. It was somewhere in Strasnice with some widow, who managed to create unbearable conditions for my parents. At my mother she used to yell: 'Smelly Jewess from a Jewish street!', despite she herself being Jewish, and as opposed to my mother, who had a bit of that Aryan blood in her, also looking Jewish. My mother could no longer stand it there, and when she could, she used to go around to post offices and libraries so that she'd be around her as little as possible.

Once a lawyer came to visit my parents and told them that if they agreed to pay higher rent, the widow wouldn't harangue them anymore. My father refused, and proclaimed that not only would they not pay more rent, but that they'd in fact pay less rent! The case went to court, my parents won, and then paid less rent.

My pre-war childhood

My brother was born in 1924, by which time my parents already had their own apartment. He was named Hanusz, Jan. In they family they called him 'Budi' - I was actually the one that gave him that name, when to a question from our friends 'Und was macht der Bruder?' ['And what does your brother do?'] I answered 'Budi ule det,' my brother goes to school. As a small child Honza [Jan] was apparently physically very weak, but had the potential to develop intellectually, he remembered a lot of things, was curious. The doctor was supposed to have told my mother that my brother was weak because everything went towards his intelligence, and nothing towards his physical growth. That he'd learn everything quickly, but at the expense of being small and weak. Which is why he forbade her to read, sing, tell or show him anything.

I think that it was in 1928 when my mother fell ill with tuberculosis. I was born in 1931, but the doctors didn't want to let her have me. They had serious concerns about her, and argued that the child that had already been born had to be protected. My mother made the rounds of various doctors for so long until the last one told her something interesting: There exists a certain chance that thanks to giving birth she'll get well. And that's really what happened. In Terezin she then worked in the fields, spent a lot of time out in the fresh air, and when at the end of the war Dr. Provizor looked at her, he said that her lungs had once again begun to function.

Back when my mother had tuberculosis and my brother was little, we had a maid. Later, when I'd also been born, we had a nanny. She was German, a Christian, from Sumava. Actually, thanks to her I have 'Kinderstube' [Kindergarten], she was excellent with children. Her sister worked as a chambermaid for some countess, and sometimes also helped out at our place. It was comical, because being used to the countess, she also sometimes asked my mother if she would want help with her toilet. My mother would say no, that she knows how to dress herself.

After the war this young lady had the International Red Cross look for us. But my mother burned the letter, as she didn't want to have anything to do with Germans. I think that later she regretted it, they were decent people after all, who hadn't done anything to us. What later happened to them, I don't know. They were most likely displaced 9. Of the Germans we knew, none of them remained in Prague, nor in Jihlava.

Actually, after the war the only witness of times long past was Ruzena, the maid that had worked for my parents before I was born. Sometime around 1928 she got married and left. In 1965 my mother ran into her in Strasnice, and they both immediately recognized each other, though they hadn't seen each other for 40 years. My mother had aged, and so had she. Mrs. Ruzena asked how the Mister was. Well, he didn't return. She asked what little Hans was doing, my brother Honza. He was also in the concentration camp, but returned. She didn't know me, so didn't ask about me. Then she and Ruzena never saw each other again. My mother then went to Jihlava, her home town, a couple of times, but said that she didn't even recognize some old granny there. Practically all the Germans had been displaced, and the Jews hadn't returned. Nobody anywhere, nothing anywhere.

My childhood is divided into a German and a Czech period. During my early days I was raised in German, and didn't learn Czech until I started Grade 1. Then I on the other hand almost forgot German. This change, the switch to another language, was a major dividing line for me. This is why I've got the German and Czech periods sharply separated in my memory. I don't know German fairy tales, or more likely don't remember them. Once I was at a fairy tale at a German theater.

Compared to my brother, who was exceptionally talented, I was considered to be the dumber one. I guess I thought more slowly, mainly I thought differently, in a different manner. I was very sensitive, perceptive, and pondered a lot. I wasn't into just any type of humor.

For example, I used to very much look forward to my birthday. When I got some presents, I left them wrapped up, and just luxuriated in looking at them. When I for example got a nightshirt, for the next four years it was still 'das Neue' ['the new one']. I also out of principle didn't take my toys apart. I guess I was peculiar in this, too, because most children break their toys to find out what make them tick. This I never did. I wanted to have everything nice and neat, I never took anything apart, I always took care of everything. And even when I got something to eat, I didn't want to eat it, I didn't even unwrap it, it seemed a shame to me. I really was sort of peculiar. I liked the color blue, plus toys that other children would pull along behind them, I wanted to have push versions of, so that I could see them, and my mother always had a lot of work to do before she found such a toy for me. I had a scooter, then a tricycle, and then I also wanted a pedal car, but that I didn't get, because by then we weren't doing so well anymore.

My mother never wanted us to fight. It wouldn't even have occurred to me, because he was seven years older than I. A friend of my mother's from Jihlava used to come visit us regularly, and would bring us chocolate figurines with filling, Mother would divide them up equally among us, and if there was an odd one out, Mother would carefully break it in half, so that we wouldn't have any reason to feel envious. For my part, I never envied my brother; maybe he later envied me my education. He himself only graduated from junior high school, after that he wasn't allowed to attend school 10. After the war he managed to take a one-year business course, and that was it. As he emphasized at my graduation, I was the first Glas in a long time to attend university.

It's said that Honza never put up with anything. When someone did something to him, he would apparently beat him severely. He may have been small and weak, but was very agile. I, on the other hand, never fought. And my father probably never did either, but he probably wanted to make it up with me, and so he promised me from five to twenty crowns [in 1929 the Czechoslovak crown (Kc) was decreed by law to be equal to 44.58 mg of gold], if I gave someone a couple of whacks in self defense. I never got them, because it went against my grain to fight. Not in Terezin,

there it was about standing your ground, but otherwise I never fought.

When I was born, in 1931, we were living in an apartment that had been built by the Solo match company. My parents knew its president, Mr. Heller. After the war I knew him as well, he returned from emigration in England. The apartment was on 6 Cechova Street, Prague 12, Vinohrady. Today it's Prague 2 - Vinohrady. We moved out in 1937. Our neighbors, the Stremchas, moved into our apartment, and apparently I used to call their little girl, who was named Jirina, Ii, because at that time I didn't know Czech yet. Recently I searched this lady out, she still lives in our apartment. So I once again got to see the room where I was born, and saw the garden where our parents apparently planted a Sparmannia. Today it's a huge tree, a witness to my happy childhood and our family life.

Some family named the Reiners had a little shop beside our building. I remember that one time Mr. Reiner had his leg in a cast, because he'd broken it when he was jumping, as was the custom up till then, onto a streetcar while it was moving. But this was already a modern motorized car with folding steps, onto which it wasn't possible to jump up anymore. Later I saw them when they arrived in Terezin with a little girl; that was five years later. Probably they never returned.

I remember one more resident of that neighborhood: on nearby Krkonosska Street lived an old, tall, bald and fat coalman. He had a little shop there, would sit on a bench in front of it, and when my mother and I would walk by him, to Rieger Gardens for example, he would always nod his head at me and say: 'Yes, yes, young man.' So I used to call him Coalman Yes. Back then I didn't yet know what that word meant in Czech.

I've got a very good memory. Always, when I experienced something peculiar, something unusual, I didn't have a problem remembering it. When I was little, I was in some doctor's office where we used to go in Podoli, under a viaduct, and where they would put bandages soaked in plaster on my feet - making me casts for shoe inserts for my flat feet. My mother was amazed how I could remember it, because I was two or three years old. Well, and I remembered it precisely because it was this peculiar experience. That building is still there, and apparently there's still some sort of doctor's office there.

One Jewish holiday we celebrated was Chanukkah. Dad would put on a hat, open the prayer book and read something from it. He knew how to read Hebrew, but whether he also understood it, that I don't know. He probably read the text aloud, but I don't know exactly. We, my brother and I, would just stare off into space, because we didn't understand it. The only thing on our minds was how much longer before we got presents.

We also observed Passover, which is like Easter. I believed in the Easter bunny and always found some presents behind the window, and so would shout, 'Thank you, bunny!' in German.

I don't remember Yom Kippur or other Jewish holidays. I can't say that we were brought up in any particularly Jewish fashion. I know some stories from the Old Testament, but we never used to go to synagogue with our parents, for example. From 1939 onwards I was a Roman Catholic, because to make emigration easier we had ourselves christened, and then we celebrated Christmas; at that time I was eight. My last Christmas in Prague was in 1942. Now, in my old age, I've got time to think, and so I think that Judaism is much more beneficial to a person than Christianity. Because Jews are still waiting for their Messiah. And it's better for people to be able to look forward to

someone who has yet to come!

In 1935 our family was granted Czechoslovak citizenship, as up to then we'd been Austrians. My father was attending Czech lessons, he knew Czech spelling and grammar and also his intonation was correct, just pronunciation gave him a bit of trouble, he never learned to say the trilled R properly. My mother didn't take lessons, she learned Czech just like that, on her own, on the street. She had problems with grammar, but on the other hand had excellent pronunciation, she even knew that trilled R. Neither of my parents knew Czech culture well, they were brought up in German culture. The books we had at home were in German, just my brother had some Czech ones as well.

In about July 1937 we moved to an apartment building on Tolstého Street, which the Securitas insurance company had built as a capital investment. That was already during the times when the atmosphere was 'thickening,' and when I was supposed to start attending school that September. My parents registered me in a Czech school 'to not increase the number of people who speak German.' I attended a Czech public boys' school in Vrsovice on Kodanska Street.

Thanks to our homeroom teacher Korda, I became a Czech. Always when we were going over something, he stood beside me and translated every word into German for me. At first I didn't understand my classmates at all, and so that 'I wouldn't be afraid,' for perhaps 14 days my mother sat in the desk next to me - to this day I can see her there in my mind. At the end of Grade 1 I already knew Czech, and along with the other children, how to read and write.

Once, when I was walking home from school, my mother went to meet me and saw me crying. Because I was supposed to perform at a school concert. My teacher wanted to make me happy, but I however didn't want to be seen. So my mother arranged it in such a way that she contributed something to the poor, and I was freed of the obligation to perform.

In Grade 3 my teacher was Vaclav Mejstrik, who, as I recently found out, also taught Zdenek Sverak [Czech playwright, scriptwriter and actor, born in 1936], and became the inspiration for the character of the teacher Hnizda in the film 'Obecná skola.' He used to teach me math, and he'd hit everyone that didn't know something with a ruler. I didn't like it because I knew that corporal punishment was no longer allowed.

We didn't know too many of our new neighbors, but I was friends with Fanda Mlejnek, the superintendent's son. Fanda had several older siblings, who'd all died before he'd been born. I couldn't understand it, how could they have died as children? I also knew Fanda's younger sister, who also died. I was at her funeral, she had this little coffin, and I was thinking to myself, how can a little kid die?

When I returned from Terezin, Fanda came over one day to welcome me back. I remembered him, but that which had been before Terezin seemed to me like from a past life. Fanda was glad to see me, but I stood there and didn't know what to do, for me he was someone from a past life. My mother then reproached me for ignoring him. It also bothered me, that I had behaved like that toward him, which is why about four years ago I went to apologize to him. He, of course, didn't remember anything. But on the other hand, he remembered how my father used to teach his mother German. I also remember very well that when I was about seven, by then I already knew Czech, I helped her wash the stairs, from the attic all the way down to the cellar, and talked to her

about family and about life.

The 1930s meant big economic problems 11. Compared to other people we were probably well off, we weren't in actual need, even though we definitely weren't rich. I remember that various beggars used to come by our place. Once some mother came leading her child by the hand, and the child was naked. My mother called me over, took off my pants and gave them to the beggar woman. She then went and bought me another pair of pants. My parents had a deep social conscience, but I think that perhaps that was the case with Jews in general.

In 1935, the bank where my father worked went bankrupt. My father found himself out of work. With difficulty he managed to find work as an accounting inspector for the Omnia company. Then he was often on business trips and thus away from home. From that time on, we weren't as well off as before. When I began attending school, my mother bemoaned the fact that while my brother had always gotten ham with his lunch for school, I only got bread with butter and an apple. She felt sorry for the fact that she couldn't also provide it to me. I actually didn't care one way or the other.

It's hard to say what my father was really like. I experienced him under normal conditions only when I was very small. Then the war came, and Terezin. When my father left on the transport to Terezin, I was a little over 13. I remember how once he came home from a business trip, and I then laid on his stomach and along with him repeated 'Käsbrot, Käsbrot' ['Slice of bread with cheese'].

I think that I was almost never out on a proper outing with my parents. I was either too small, or later, during the occupation, we weren't allowed into the forest and outside of Prague. But I do remember one outing very well. At that time we were still allowed into the forest, so our whole family was there. My father didn't bring any games with him, but for lunch we had two hard-boiled eggs, one with a light-colored shell and the other with a dark one. So my father took a napkin, drew a board on it like for checkers or chess, broke pieces off the eggshells for figures, and we played checkers.

One more outing has stuck in my mind, this one was just me, my father and my brother. I might have been around nine, because at the age of ten I was already not allowed into the forest, and when I was eleven I went to Terezin. On this outing I wanted to pick some dandelions or something like that for my mother. My father and brother were telling me that the flowers would wilt, for me to throw them away, why bring my mother wilted flowers. I didn't listen to them and brought them to my mother anyways. She was delighted, because she knew I'd done it of my own accord; she put them in water and the flowers revived. Suddenly she had a fresh bunch of flowers at home. It's possible that at that time Jews weren't allowed to buy them. Actually, we weren't allowed to do anything, absolutely nothing. Just drink water, breathe and eat food from a small ration 12.

Even when we were in Terezin, my father tried to devote himself to me. Every Sunday afternoon he'd pick me up from the 'Heim,' and we'd walk to the Dresden barracks to watch a soccer match. Or he'd go for a walk around Terezin with me. Terezin is tiny, and we weren't allowed outside the fortifications, so they were always walks along the same, intimately familiar places, but I used to greatly look forward to those afternoons with Father.

When we were still living in Prague, I very much liked going to the puppet theater that was run by the Methodist-Baptist church on Kodanska Street in Vrsovice, not far from us. They had large puppets and I liked it there very much. The minister always stood by the door and showed people

where they should sit. I had to sit in the back, because I was big, and my mother would sit with me. These theater performances actually represented my one and only regular cultural experience, which however didn't last long, as later we were forbidden from attending theaters as well. The same went for the cinema. As a substitute, in 1940 my father made me a puppet theater with two curtains and lighting, and even wrote some plays for me. I was thrilled by it, but then when we left for Terezin, we left the puppet theater in the apartment - where it ended up I never found out.

And which of the restrictions whose goal was to make life impossible for us Jews affected me the most? Maybe for some school-age readers this may seem incredible, but the thing that had the worst impact on me was that I wasn't allowed to attend school. However - if children would have kept on playing with me, it wouldn't have been so terrible. But I ended up alone. I couldn't go out into the street, because there my former friends yelled: 'Smelly Jew!' at me, and that I didn't care for. When the guys turned their backs on me, some girls let me play with them for another few days. Suddenly they lost interest, girls are simply like that. But back then I got very upset at them, because suddenly I was completely alone.

Before the war I managed to finish only three grades of public school 13. My father did teach me something at home, but it was irregularly and he didn't have the patience for it. In Prague there was a school for Jewish children in the Old Town, but that was too far for me. Already back then we weren't allowed to ride the streetcar, and I wouldn't have managed to walk there every day. And so I sat at home and read.

My first book, at the age of eight, was 'Klapzubova jedenactka' ['Klapzub's Eleven'], I read it at least ten times, and to this day I know some passages off by heart. We didn't have a lot of Czech books at home, which is why I secretly read 'rodokaps' [Czech abbreviation for a line of pocket adventure novels (roman do kapsy), which later came to mean any cheap adventure literature]. My father pretended he didn't know about it, but my mother then told me that he'd known about it all right, but what was the poor guy supposed to do with me. I became an enthusiastic reader of the genre. When after the war a 'rodokaps' that I had read before my departure for Terezin came into my hands, three years later, actually, I realized that it was unreadable. It's strange, because I hadn't actually had any opportunities to refine my tastes.

An interesting chapter was the possibility of our emigration. We could have saved ourselves, because in the fall of 1938 my mother was in England visiting her sister, Aunt Heda, who had emigrated there with her family in the spring of that year. When she was crossing the border, a border official started a conversation with her, my mother knew English fairly well. He told her to not return home, that it would end up badly here. But she said that she had her family in Prague. So he told her to go, get her family and return to England, that we could live there. She objected, that we weren't rich and that we didn't have anything to live on. He told her that she could work in England. And really, later she realized that she had gotten a work permit in her passport. At home she showed the permit to my father, but he said: 'I'm not going to let my wife support me, that's out of the question. England and France won't abandon us.'

After the occupation, when my father realized that England and France had abandoned us after all, he himself tried to find a way out. At the American consulate he found out that thanks to his being born in Terst, the Americans had included him in the Italian quota. We could have moved out of the country immediately, but we didn't have enough money for the security deposit. If we did know

someone in America, they were people that had just managed to gain a foothold there, and weren't willing to commit a large amount of money for us. Which is why my father wrote a letter to the mayor of New York, LaGuardia, originally an Italian Jew, in which he asked him to help us. LaGuardia even answered him, but wrote that he couldn't help us, for us to not be upset with him, but that it could ruin his chances in the next elections. [LaGuardia, Fiorello Henry (born Fiorello Enrico LaGuardia; (1882-1947): mayor of New York for three terms from 1934 to 1945.]

So we stayed here. As long as there was hope that we'd succeed in emigrating, so until the war broke out, we were preparing for it. My father was attending pedicurist lessons, once he even gave me a pedicure as practice. For mother, he did it several times. He bought this beautiful leather briefcase, where he had his tools and some bottles with various tinctures. The briefcase still exists, my children used it for paints, and I still use the clippers for cutting my nails. My mother attended courses at a confectioner's. At that time she was baking a lot at home, to practice.

Because of the eventual emigration, we had ourselves christened in 1939. The point wasn't for us to rid ourselves of our Jewish identity, but we were led to it by the fact that abroad they liked it more when Christians immigrated, and not Jews. We wanted to increase our chances of being accepted somewhere.

For me it represented one additional advantage: at a time when I was no longer allowed to attend school and had no duties, I joined a church group at the Church of St. Ignatz on Charles Square, and every morning I'd go there as an altar boy for the morning mass. Then the friars would give me breakfast, coffee with milk with a skin on it, I absolutely hated the skin, and a piece of dry bread. At that time we weren't that badly off yet, and though we no longer had butter, we did still have margarine, so I didn't like dry bread too much. I ate breakfast not out of hunger, but from a feeling that it wasn't polite to return it. Then, in Terezin, I remembered the skin and the dry bread, too, with misty eyes. Until they forbade us from riding in the last streetcar wagon, I had at least some duty. Then I lost that one, too - Charles Square became too distant for me.

In 1939 we moved from the apartment on Tolsteho Street a bit further on, into a building on Bulharska Street, number 17. My parents wisely chose a two-room apartment with a kitchenette. They removed the partition that was there, and so this double bachelor apartment was created. Then when the Germans were going around Prague and picking apartments for themselves, ours didn't seem attractive to them, and this is why we were able to stay in it until the transport.

Already living in that building was the family of Mr. Auerbach, my father's former colleague from the Omnia company. The Auerbachs had two sons who had left before we moved in there, on Nicholas Winton's 14 transport to England. The Auerbachs then arrived in Terezin and were also in the same wagon as my father in the transport to Auschwitz. After the war the young Auerbachs came to ask my mother whether she didn't know what had happened to their parents. She probably told them that they'd left Terezin on a transport.

Terezin

My brother's last school education was Grade 8, he wasn't allowed to school after that. I don't know how, but he then got brigade work with some farmer in eastern Bohemia. He actually could have stayed there for the whole war, because no one knew that he was a Jew. He got normal ration coupons like everyone else, he even got tobacco coupons. But when Jews had to register with the

Gestapo, our parents were suddenly afraid that someone could inform on them, that they've got one more son. So they persuaded the police commissar to register my brother after the fact. My brother then registered in Prague, and then left with us for Terezin.

One evening someone rang at our door, and brought a summons to the transport. It was about a week or 14 days before our departure, because Mother then managed to hide some of our things with friends. I know that she hid a piece of family jewelry that she'd gotten from my father's father. Reputedly at the beginning of the 19th century, an ancestor of his had had it made for his daughter. It's said that since then there hadn't been another daughter. After the war we got it back, and my son and I have already agreed that when my granddaughter is grown up, she'll get it. I don't know what else Mother hid. I hid a bag of marbles, a game called 'fifteen' and a wooden 'hedgehog in a cage' brainteaser, which I got back after the war and still have to this day.

We were supposed to report to the Gestapo in Stresovice on 16th April 1942, for which we got permission to ride the streetcar. We had hand bags with us, the large ones were probably carted off by truck, as we would scarcely have been able to carry the permitted 50 kilos. I had a transport number, my parents were constantly repeating it to me, that I have to remember it, EZ 24, by brother EZ 22, my mother EZ 23 and my father EZ 21. The abbreviation meant 'traveling individually.' As I found out only after the war, my real number was ST 34. Back then about twenty other people left for Terezin with us.

My parents didn't explain much of anything to me, I knew only that we were going to Terezin, and they asked me what book I wanted to take with me. It was 'Záhada hlavolamu' ['The Mystery of the Brainteaser'] by J. Foglar.

Along with my parents, I believed that by my birthday in June I'd be back home. This faith, that by the summer, by Christmas, and again by the summer and so on it would be over, this conviction buoyed us the whole time in Terezin. Whether this was also the case in Auschwitz and further on, I don't know. We survived on faith in the future. After the war I brought this trait with me back from Terezin, I need to constantly be looking forward to something, perhaps I was born with this trait. I always say that the only thing I don't look forward to is the dentist.

At the Gestapo, a Gestapo officer stole our jewels and a watch from us while checking the list. Then we got lunch and in the afternoon, a jail paddy-wagon, a so-called 'Green Anton,' drove us to Hybernské, today Masaryk Station, and then we left on a normal passenger train under the watch of several civilians - probably from the Gestapo - to Bohusovice. At that time there wasn't yet a spur line from Bohusovice to Terezin, and so we then walked to Terezin, the luggage and old people were probably carted there on trucks.

In Terezin I was actually better off than in Prague, because there I had friends. Even though I was of course hungry, was afraid of the transports, and experienced and saw various bad and very sad things, but nothing actually happened to me; I returned. I like living, that I learned in Terezin. I'm glad to be in this world. That's probably the most valuable thing I brought back with me from Terezin. Once I told my friend from Terezin, Petr Seidemann: 'Terezin was a good school of life.' And he said: 'It was, but a little too dangerous.' He's right. Terezin gave me the fact that I'm able to value life - and that's priceless. The fact that I think about Terezin like this, and that I think about it at all, is I guess given by my tendency for 'eytsenizing' [from the Yiddish eytsn, to advise]. In Terezin, they called me Eytsener, or in Jewish Wiseguy. It's only now, in retirement, when I go to

Terezin for seminars and so on, do I have time to think about things again and again.

At first we lived in the shloiska in the Magdeburg barracks, then I was with my brother and father in the Sudeten barracks, and I arrived, the same as my mother, in the Hamburg barracks. Our entire family used to regularly meet at my mother's place in the Hamburg barracks. Then everyone was moved out of the barracks, and she lived in some house, perhaps on Crete. She worked in agriculture, which had several advantages. For one, her tuberculosis improved. Being out in the fresh air was very beneficial to her, and her lungs began to function again. Then it was also good that she could eat some vegetables in the field from time to time, and so help herself and us. It wasn't all the time, not everything could be eaten raw, but for example when it was tomato season, Mother ate her fill of tomatoes and then left her ration for us. By the way, after the war she never ate another tomato.

What was probably the most important, people working in agriculture were protected, they didn't have to go into the transports. Up to the age of sixteen their children were protected too. Which is why I also stayed in Terezin until the end.

My brother became a coachman, so he lived with the other coachmen, at first in a barn across from the stables, and then in this little room in a nearby house. Our family then would meet night after night there at his place. To this day, my nephew has a cabinet that he had there, in his washroom.

"Heim 236"

In the Hamburg barracks we lived in 'Heim 236,' which was on the second floor. Here I spent a long part of my stay in Terezin, which is why I'll describe it more closely for you. At the end of the same hallway as ours was also 'Heim 233,' where the younger boys lived, around six or seven years old. That's also where Aki Hermann came to us from, his father was a Hebrew teacher. Aki Hermann survived, after the war he was in a convalescence home and then left for America, I think. This 'Heim' was the first room, so on the facade you can see two windows.

Across from 'Heim 233' was a toilet, but it was always 'flooded,' so we preferred to use the toilets quite far away, in the center of the barracks. That it was far from us is something I found out for myself, when at night I had to go No. 2; I had to absolve that long trip, and when I returned and had barely put my leg up on my bunk I had to go again, so I began running, but didn't get there in time and had it in my pants. How the smaller boys managed to make it, I don't know. The practically permanent stress that a small child in Terezin had to endure led to the fact that I peed myself every night. I was terribly ashamed of it, an eleven, twelve-year-old boy!

Then there were four windows of the hall where mothers with little children lived, about four or five years old. Then there was our 'Kinderheim 236.' It was one room that had a door on one of the shorter sides and across from it two windows.

In the beginning, in 'Heim 236,' we slept on mattresses on the floor. Small children on one, older ones on two. The women that minded us slept with us, behind a partition of blankets. One day a minder came up to me and asked me whether I wouldn't give up one mattress, because additional children had arrived and there weren't enough mattresses, that after all I was big now. I was eleven, and for my age was quite big, so I gave up the mattress. After that sleeping wasn't very comfortable, because the mattress ended where my back ended, and so the edge of the mattress

pressed into my back. Some time later, the minder came again, that more children had arrived and that there weren't any mattresses for them, whether I wouldn't give up the other mattress, too, since I was after all a big boy now. So then I slept just on a blanket on the ground.

One night I'm sleeping like this, and suddenly was wakened by someone tugging on my arm. I looked about in the nighttime shadows, and saw that the boy lying next to me was pointing at something. And there I saw a smaller boy, how, apparently in his sleep, he'd kneeled, pulled down his pajamas or sweatpants and was peeing behind the head of the boy lying next to him. Then he pulled his pants up again, laid down and slept contentedly on. At that moment I had the feeling that I'd just grown up.

Between the windows there were these small, square cabinets for the most essential things, like things for washing, a food dish with cutlery and so on. I don't even know anymore if everyone had his own cabinet. Our clothes were somewhere else, today I don't even know where. In front of the cabinets there was a little bit of space left, where there were four tables pushed together and chairs and a blackboard, and that's where we studied.

Then, when we didn't all fit on mattresses on the floor anymore, they put two-story bunk beds with ladders along both longer sides of our 'Heim,' but I managed to climb up on my bed without using the ladder. On the left side of the windows, the bunks began with Jindra Brössler's bed. He used to quite often sit there and stare into space, and we'd then cluster around him and plead with him: 'Brézl, move your stomach,' and he'd puff up his stomach in an amazing fashion. Brézl then disappeared from the 'Heim.'

Sometime around 1958, a young man began coming to the newsroom of the Prague Central TV Studio as a part-time cameraman, and his face reminded me of Jindra Brössler, whom I'd however last seen fifteen years earlier. For a long time I didn't dare approach him, until finally I got up the nerve and asked him whether he hadn't by chance been in Terezin during the war. He said yes. And in 'Heim 236?' That, too. So I asked him: 'How is it that you're alive, I thought that when you weren't with us in the convalescence home, that you'd gone on a transport to Auschwitz, and I thought you were long dead.' It came out that he'd left the 'Heim' for his mother's room because he'd been sick, and at the beginning of 1945 left on a transport to Switzerland in exchange for senior SS officers. He didn't remember his stay in the 'Heim,' his nickname Brézl nor being able to puff up his stomach. But he told me that their stay in Switzerland hadn't been any special treat; not long ago I found out that the Swiss had been expecting important, prominent Jews, and then just ordinary Jews arrived.

Jindra became a TV cameraman in Brno, and in 1968 emigrated to West Germany, and up until recently was working as head cameraman for the ZDF news department. He occasionally comes to Prague, and so I can always again remind myself of my amazement when I experienced his resurrection.

On the other side by the window, up above, were the beds of two brothers, Ivan and Petr Hochberg. They left and didn't return. Their father returned after the war, remarried and had another son. When the Jewish Museum held a drive, for people to bring in photos of their friends and relatives, his wife brought in an album where those boys were with their mother, and left without saying anything. That's why nothing else is known about them.

Below them was Harry Knöpfelmacher's bed, who we used to call Knoflicek ['Little Button']. He was about three years younger than I, so he might have been eight. He had a round face with freckles, and curly hair, the same as his mother. Knoflicek slept under a flowered duvet. Every morning his mother used to come to wake him up, and we used to shout at him: 'Knoflicek, wake up, your mommy's here!'

Up above, beside the Hochberger brothers, was Jirka [Jiri] Oppenheimer's bed; instead of 'r' he use to say 'f.' Jifi! A little further on were the beds of my distant cousins Pavel and Tomas Glas, who stayed in Terezin up until the end, after the war they might have emigrated to Israel, but I've never heard of them again. Up above was also my spot, and at the end of that row was the bed of Tomy Katz, the son of the head of our 'Heim,' Mrs. Katz.

At first I'd been sleeping in the opposite row of bunks, but then I moved. Because beside me was Wolfgang Sorauer, who was apparently in the throes of puberty, and was constantly rolling over onto me, which I, of course, didn't like, and so complained to my mother. My mother realized what was up, talked to Mrs. Katz, who transferred me over to the other side. Wolfi was one of the few boys that returned, but after returning from the convalescence home I never heard of him again.

In the 'Heim' we were tormented by fleas and bedbugs. Bedbugs may have been bigger and so drank more blood, and when you squashed them they stank, but they were easier to catch, because they just crawled, while fleas jumped. We learned to find, catch and reliably kill fleas - you gripped them between your nails and tore them in half - otherwise there was the danger of them jumping away and continuing to bite. And so a regular part of our everyday schedule, like morning hygiene - with ear inspections, whether they're not dirty - breakfast and so on, was the compulsory catching of fleas at 7:20am. One boy once caught a record 28 fleas!

Then when bedbugs multiplied excessively, they moved us out, sealed all the cracks and filled the room with gas. When the gassing ended, and the 'Heim' aired out, we went inside again and I went to my bed and without thinking stuck my hand between the edge board and the mattress, and scooped up a handful of dried-up bedbugs. I don't even dare guess how many of them they had to sweep out of the whole 'Heim.'

Teaching was forbidden in Terezin, but children studied in secret. As far as I know, no one learned to read and write there. He who arrived illiterate, and returned at all, then again illiterate. For one, the collective of children changed a lot, then there were no teaching aids, and there weren't enough experienced teachers.

In the Hamburg barracks, we were taught by Dr. Ebersohn. At first we addressed him as Mr. Ebersohn, but Mrs. Katzová, the 'Heim' leader, told us once that we should address him as Mr. Doctor, because he had studied, after all. That was a new bit of information for me: people study not so that they'd know something, but to have a title. I have him to thank for learning to write numerals. That's something I hadn't known from public school up to then. He also showed us a map of the Mediterranean Sea, which was a novelty for me. I had known that the Mediterranean Sea existed, but I'd never held an atlas in my hands; in Grade 3 I had no reason to look at maps.

In the Hamburg barracks we, the children, had a library from our own resources - the way it worked was each one of us made his books available, and in exchange he could borrow the books of others. I don't remember anymore where it was, nor how exactly it was organized. Its opening

hours are written in an issue of our magazine. But then everything fell apart when the young man who served as librarian left on a transport. We then took the books back. However, I'd contributed 'Záhada hlavolamu,' and then ended up with some piece of trash.

After being moved to L 417, I was put into 'sekunda' [second of eight years of high school. Equivalent to Grade 7], but was missing Grades 4 to 6. So when our teacher Irena Seidlerová, for example, teaching us what specific weight was, today it's specific gravity, I didn't understand what, for me, was such an abstract notion. For me, everything in Terezin was concrete, even though I probably didn't know either of those words back then.

In the afternoon we were off, and when it wasn't raining, we used to play on the barracks grounds and later soccer up on the fortifications. Sometimes there were organized games up on the fortifications, then we'd play for example dodge-ball, sometimes even with the girls. When the weather was bad and we couldn't go out, we'd play button soccer in the 'Heim,' with a team of 11 buttons we even had a league. Everyone played with everyone. The guys scrounged up an ordinary piece of board somewhere, and we marked the goalposts with nails. One guy even had a watch, so we could time it, two times 20 minutes. We set up the buttons on the board like soccer players. We cut large ladies' buttons in half, those were goalkeepers, who you were allowed to put in the way of a shot, but not to then hold them. Some player would then be moved by flicking, and then was left lying where he ended up. The ball was a button from a fly, back then zippers weren't used yet. When the button was laid down on its flat side, it slid along, on the curved one while being shot by a winger - that was a button filed down on one side - the ball was centered into the space in front of the net.

During the day, in the aisle between the bunks in 'Heim 236,' one of our caretakers, Hanka Sachslová, took care of the children that didn't know how to read and write yet, so she would tell or read something to them, or sang songs with them. But they couldn't be too loud, so that they wouldn't interfere with our studies. During the evening, there were various amusements. Sometimes Hanka's sister Eva read 'Huckleberry Finn' to us, or we'd put on various skits.

Once Mr. Katz, Tomy's dad, rehearsed scenes from R. Kipling's 'Jungle Book' with several boys - it was a quite an 'epic' performance, with a curtain, hanging from a broom laid across both rows of bunks, lighting, makeup and 'costumes.' The performance began quite ingloriously, during the opening of the curtain it fell down along with the broom, but then everything continued successfully and for most of the boys it was most likely the first 'real' theater performance that they'd seen. In the end, for me, too.

I saw Mr. Katz once after the war on Jecná Street in Prague, but I didn't muster the courage to say anything to him, because I knew that neither his wife nor his son had returned. What's more, he was with some woman I didn't know, so I was embarrassed to dredge up old memories.

Mostly, however, those of us that knew how to read, read something exciting, and then improvised it for the other boys, without rehearsals, decorations or costumes, with just the most basic of props. The younger boys were grateful to us, because what else did they have to do in the evening? It was too late to be allowed out, and they didn't know how to read.

Once we 'staged' like this a story about a town where fires were starting under mysterious circumstances. There was this one detective there, who calculated that the fires were originating

from one place. He then set out for that place, and found a man polishing a lens in a tower. With it he was concentrating the sun's rays on buildings insured by an insurance company that he was taking revenge on for some wrong they had once done him. The lens was represented by a tin sink.

Once we even 'put on' Don Quixote according to a children's version of the book. I don't remember the performance much, just that I was the innkeeper who knighted Don Quixote. In the book, the innkeeper read grain prices as the knighting ritual, and because I didn't know how in the time of M. Cervantes they weighed and paid for grain, I sang: 'Four kilos of oats for four crowns fifty.' Well, the other guys didn't know it either, which is why they didn't mind.

We had other caretakers in 'Heim 236,' but basically most of all we liked Hanka Sachslová, mainly the younger boys, because she paid the most attention to them. When a few years ago, we met up in Terezin during some event, Hanka's husband was there, too, and Hanka was introducing me to friends of hers as her ward. Everyone was laughing, because I'm an old man now, so some ward, but in Terezin that age difference really meant a lot. In 1943 I was 12, and she was 17; for me she was an adult woman and I was a little kid.

Hanka didn't remember me, but then she remembered me in connection with one embarrassing matter. This was in 1943, when she was still with us and we were preparing for Mother's Day. So I wanted to express to her something akin to recognition that she was taking care of us like a mother. But it had to be something I could manage to make on my own, without anyone's help, preferably out of paper. And so out of a piece of paper I cut out two headpieces of a cradle, and between them glued paper folded like an accordion, so it was this crib that you could unfold and rock. I gave it to her, and she blushed horribly and ran away. I couldn't understand why. It wasn't until we met years ago that she revealed to me why: she thought it was a reference to the fact that in Terezin she was going out with one young man. But back then that didn't occur to me at all.

Hanka also remembered my distant cousin Pavlík Kraus, who was with her in the transport to Auschwitz, but never returned. His mother and mine were cousins, and of that entire family, I think only Pavlík's brother Harry returned.

Hanka's younger sister Eva sometimes used to come read to us in the evening, when her sister was off. She'd sit on a chair in the aisle between the bunks, 35 boys around her. So it's no wonder that she didn't remember me when I met up with her after the war. Neither did she remember that she used to read Huckleberry Finn to us, but she did know that it was her favorite book. The Sachsl sisters left with their mother, they'd already lost their father before the war, in December 1943 on a transport to Auschwitz-Birkenau. They then went to work in the Christianstadt camp [subsidiary camp Gross-Rosen, in Polish Rogoznica], and from there they went on a death march in the winter of 1945 to Cheb, they then ended up in Bergen-Belsen 15, where they caught typhoid fever, had high fevers, hallucinated and almost didn't make it.

Of all the caretakers, we most obeyed Marta Kacjevová, who was about 18 back then. She looked like an older boy, slim, with curly hair, and she said that once she'd been shaved bald. We worshipped her, despite the fact that when someone didn't listen, a cuff to the head would come flying in his direction right away, no questions asked. Marta left in the fall of 1943 and didn't return...

I also remember our caretaker Milena Pirnerová, perhaps a relative of the painter Maxmilian Pirner. There's one peculiar scene connected with her. Back then, water was carried to 'Heim 236' in two pails. Most often Milena Pirnerová used to send me and my friend Jirka Silberstein for water, and this by calling out: 'Silberstein and Glas for water!' And so back then it occurred to me that Jirka and I could play a scene on this theme. It took place there, where those pails really stood, by the door, and Milena would play along with us. The scene began with her usual calling out: 'Silberstein and Glas for water!' Jirka and I would at first explain to her that we're not that strong to be always going for water, and would try to convince her that someone else should also go with the pails, and then we'd just mouth off. Despite the fact that I'd never been to the theater before, I had some 'drama experience' as a reader of books, and so the scene ended as it began, that is, with Milena calling out: 'Silberstein and Glas for water!' Neither Jirka nor Milena returned.

Another time, in the infirmary, I experienced a heart-rending scene. A small, five-year-old girl was there with us, who her granny used to come visit. She was a real granny, because she had a kerchief on her head and the little girl used to call her Onubaba. One time her granny came to see her and was weeping terribly, she covered the little girl in kisses from head to toe and back again, the girl was laughing and kept calling out Onubaba, Onubaba. They then had to lead the granny off, and we later found out that her grandma was in the transport and had come to say goodbye to her granddaughter, because she suspected that she'd never see her again.

Sometimes Sister Ilse would be on duty, who would play the guitar for us and sing in German. Otherwise I just remembered that she had long hair coiled in a bun. I recalled her when I was in Germany several years ago for forums about Terezin, and one man brought me a brochure about her with her portrait drawn in pen.

Then I was in Terezin at a concert of one female Norwegian Jewish singer, who was singing her songs. Finally, at the Czech exhibition in Auschwitz, I found a remembrance of her with her portrait. She was named Ilse Weber, and was a Sudeten German [16] Jew, a poet, who left on a transport to Auschwitz, and along with her child, went into the gas. Her son might still be alive.

In Terezin we also studied Ivrit, which is modern Hebrew, and also the Hebrew alphabet, but not systematically. We did group exercises using Hebrew commands, but those then evaporated from my head. We practiced the Hatikvah [17], the Jewish hymn, and I also remember the song 'My Homeland is Palestine.' I knew that I was of Jewish origin, I was, after all, imprisoned in Terezin because of it, but from the time I know Czech, I feel myself to be a Czech, and ever since then the Czech lands have always been my native land.

When after the war I then married my wife, who wasn't Jewish, for a long time I had this strange notion that my Jewish ancestors were looking at me accusingly, that I'd betrayed them. In the end I came to terms with it in some fashion, and I say that I'm a Czech Jew, a European, and that in Terezin I learned to be proud of being a human being. I also say that here in Central Europe it's nonsense to talk about any sort of racial purity, after all, nations traveled back and forth, so races and nations mixed together.

When I go to talk with students, I say that everyone is born as a human being, but if he'll really be one, that that's not something that his mommy and daddy can arrange, that's something that depends only on him. And right away I add that I don't know how to define 'human being,' except perhaps anthropologically. It's especially difficult in recent times, when you can't even preclude the

existence of child criminals and even [child] murderers and soldiers. Because of my experiences in Terezin, I'm very hung up on protecting children. So it's then horrible when children do each other harm.

Terezin cured me of much foolishness. In Terezin we sometimes had sweet cream-filled buns for lunch. Leavened buns, from flour, water, yeast and powdered eggs. It was neither paper nor wood, so it was edible. They were served with a cream made from fine flour mixed into melta [a coffee substitute made from chicory and rye], a bit of sugar and a bit of margarine. It was cold, it had lumps inside, but it was sweet, so it was good.

I tenaciously wished to once be able to eat a proper portion of it. I looked forward to being able to eat it once the war would be over. After the war, I, of course, didn't even think of such buns, but back then my mother arranged for me to get three or four portions of it, she exchanged it for tomatoes. How I was looking forward to having it! I ate the first portion, and was delighted. Then the second portion, by then I already knew what it tasted like. Then I had the third portion, by then I wasn't that thrilled by it, and by the fourth I was sick of it, because I'd had too much. Plus I realized that it wasn't worth it, because it really wasn't that good. This experience was priceless. Since that time, I've never wished for something I can't have, and before I wanted something, I thoroughly thought it over, whether it's worth it.

In this sense, Terezin was useful in many ways. I learned many things, which were painful, but not all that terribly so. For example: Terezin also had a Scout 18 movement, secret of course. That was in the first half of 1944, when I was no longer living in the 'Heim,' but in the 'school' in L 417. The guys elected an advisor from amongst themselves, who was supposed to lead the others. But then some kid appeared who began agitating against the current advisor. He ran off at the mouth for so long, that I'd be better and so on, until the guys recalled the previous advisor and I became the leader.

I was leader for some time, but then that guy started talking again, that I was doing it wrong. And so the guys recalled me and elected him. What people won't do to get a certain position. I'd figured it out, plus I soon moved out of that home anyways. It was a good education. Without great pain I found out how things went in life, and also that I wasn't any sort of manager. Neither did I seek out management positions later in life, and I was glad that no one forced me into them.

I learned all sorts of things in Terezin. That food is sacred is something I learned in Terezin. That loving someone is sacred. That you shouldn't cause anyone pain. Even unwittingly, that's the saddest thing, when you don't want to, and you cause someone pain. In Terezin, and then after the war, my mother explained to me that not just anyone could offend me, only a person of my own standing. To which I've added, why should a person of my standing want to offend me, unless by mistake, but that doesn't count.

In 'Heim 236' I met Petr Seidemann, and we then became friends 'for life and in death' as they write in boys' books. He was the same age as I, was from Prague, was an only child, and as opposed to me, was a Czech Jew with Czech as his mother tongue. I knew both his parents, mainly his Mom. After the war, they both moved to Venezuela. We still write each other, I went to [South] America to visit him, and he on the other hand sometimes comes to Prague.

In Terezin we published a magazine together, which we called 'Domov' ['Home']. To this day, we still don't understand how with such scant knowledge we could have published a magazine at all, and made it look like it did. We were very inspired by 'Mlady Hlasatel,' where a comics serial about the 'Rychlé Sípy' [Fast Arrows] boys' club was published. Back then we didn't know other Terezin children's magazines from various 'Heims,' and neither did we know that they existed. None of the adults interfered with the magazine, just once someone arranged a meeting for us with a former writer for Prager Tagblatt 19, who gave us a few pieces of advice. We took work on the magazine very seriously, we imagined that we were addressing our readers. That a large part of our readers didn't actually know how to read is something we somehow didn't realize.

Because I understood German, I could read German books and watch German plays. I for example read the book 'Baumwolle' ['Cotton'] by Anton Zischka, an educational book, actually the first of that kind that I'd read, and which greatly captivated me. Of the plays, I for example remember the dramatization of Erich Kästner's book 'Emil and the Detectives,' which I'd read in the Czech translation still back in Prague. The play was put on by a group of German Jewish children, it had singing, and for example Emil sang: 'Ich bin Emil aus Neustadt, Emil aus Neustadt, Emil aus Neustadt, bestohlen war ich von diesem Kerl, von diesem Kerl, von diesem Kerl.' It was only after the war that I found out that it was a melody from the operetta 'Beautiful Helena' by J. Offenbach. I'm King Menelaus, King Menelaus, King Menelaus...

Another German theater performance that captivated me was one where Mrs. Zobelová, a colleague of my father's in Terezin, played a clown. She'd apparently made herself a clown costume and played very convincingly, probably also because she was hunchbacked and so looked like a dwarf. When my father was leaving Terezin, it was Mrs. Zobelová that he asked to help us if we needed something. As far as I remember, she kept her promise. She was from a mixed marriage, had a daughter in Germany and apparently returned to her after the war.

A big help for prisoners in Terezin were food parcels sent by their friends or relatives. We also used to get some, our neighbor from where we last lived, on Bulhlarská Street, used to send them. But probably only in the beginning, at least I don't remember it later anymore. It was harder and harder to send someone something. Quantities were limited, you had to send the person in question a correspondence stamp from the ghetto. The package had to contain something that would keep, there was no point in sending bread or margarine. They'd send sugar, barley, grits, there was no rice, and dried milk was impossible to find. You also didn't know if they didn't check the parcels. Our neighbor didn't have a lot of money, and getting food coupons was a problem. It really wasn't that easy to send someone something.

At one time in Terezin, there was a disease called encephalitis. Not the one from ticks, but some epidemic where apparently one of the symptoms was that a person saw double. Father had it, too. We boys from 'Heim 236' wished very much that the lady that was by the window where they handed out food and kept an eye on the food cards, would also have encephalitis and would thus see two stubs instead of one, and so would yell 'Zweimal!' into the window, and we'd thus get two portions. But she never got it. Children in Terezin were still children, and our ideas were still childlike.

In January 1944 they moved us to 'Heim No. 2' in the school at L 417. This was a building with several 'Heims,' ours had the youngest boys. We had different caretakers, and there was also a

different schedule. I remember only one of the caretakers, Irena Seidlerova. She was strict with us. During one reunion of former Terezin children several years ago, she proclaimed that in 'Heim 236' in the Hamburg barracks they'd spoiled us, that they even used to bring us food, but that wasn't true, we used to go for food ourselves, to the barracks kitchen in the middle tract.

My friend Benno Pulgram

Connected to Irena Seidlerová is a peculiar story regarding my friend Benno Pulgram. About eight years ago, my wife, who works at the Old New Synagogue, came home and told me that that day a Czech-speaking man had been making the rounds at the Jewish community, asking about children from the Hamburg barracks. My wife told him my name, but he didn't recognize it, but he gave her his business card. When on it I read Vaclav A. Simecek, Toronto, it didn't mean anything to me, just that it isn't after all a Jewish name. But then I looked at the next line down, and there, written by hand, was BENNO PULGRAM. Right away I jumped up, that was a friend of mine from 'Heim 236,' who I thought was long since dead, because after the war he hadn't been in the convalescence home.

I remembered him well, because when he came to our 'Heim' in the fall of 1943, we older ones looked him over, and it seemed to us that for a half -gram [the Czech word for half is 'pul'], Pulgram, he seemed quite large, and so we began calling him Celygram [Wholegram]. And that he seemed kind of weird to us, because he was in Terezin all by himself.

So I sent him a letter to Canada, with the salutation Hi Benno Wholegram! Then in the spring he came to Prague, I went to meet him at the main train station, and carried a sign saying BENNO PULGRAM in my hand. Suddenly I saw a smaller man coming towards me and waving, still with slicked-down hair as I remembered him from that time more than 50 years ago, even through the hair was a bit thinner.

As Benno told me, he had been from Brno, from a mixed marriage, and he had been in Terezin with his little sister, who died after the war. His father was a Jew, and had come to Terezin sometime earlier. The children, with a stopover in Prague, came somewhat later, so their father was no longer in Terezin when they arrived. Benno came to our 'Heim' when we were still in the Hamburg barracks, and then together we were moved to the school.

Benno and his sister were scheduled for the last transport to leave Terezin, my father was on it, too. Now Irena Seidlerová arrives on the scene: Both of the children were already standing in the courtyard of the Hamburg barracks, and were checked off for boarding the transport, with a sign hanging from their necks, even though as half-breeds they weren't supposed to be in the transport. At that moment along came Irena, took them by the hand and led them away. She locked them up in some janitor's closet with rags, pails and brooms; for a while Benno and his sister listened to the commotion out in the courtyard and then fell asleep. The next morning they woke up, and the courtyard was empty.

Irena most likely then arranged for them to get into some building on the edge of Terezin, where upstairs there were girls and downstairs boys. They couldn't go back to school, because it was assumed that they'd departed. They stayed in hiding like this until the end of the war.

Their mother had absolutely no news of them. As soon as the war ended, she and her partner, Mr. Simecek, took a car, put a bed sheet with a red cross on it, and drove to Terezin. Terezin was under quarantine at the time, but apparently the impression that they were from the Red Cross helped them get inside. Benno doesn't know how, but their mother managed to find them, undressed them, put them on the floor of the car so that they wouldn't be found out at the checkpoints, and drove them back to Brno.

Living together with my family at Terezin

In May 1944 our entire family moved into one room together. My father was a staff member, and so as patronage got one room for the family in a building that is no longer standing. Today most buildings in Terezin have two or three stories, but this one had only a ground floor. It was located in a side street that was perpendicular to Langestrasse, abutted to the stables, and its gates were designated L 409. Behind the gates there were actually two houses, but there was only one common designation. You went inside from the courtyard, where there was a so-called block kitchen and a mess window. This kitchen and window served people who lived scattered about outside the barracks, otherwise the barracks had their own mess halls inside. I remember how in the courtyard there'd always be people standing in line, and they would eat the food they got right there on the spot. Or they'd take it home to prepare it somehow, because in the courtyard there were no benches or even chairs that you could sit on.

From the courtyard you went in through a hallway, at whose end was the door of our room. The room had two windows facing the street, and was divided in two by a wooden partition, ending about a half meter from the ceiling. My brother and I had beds in the smaller part, and in the larger was my mother's and father's bed, a kitchen table with a marble top, and a stove which could be used to heat food.

Today our building is no longer standing, after the war it was one of the few that was demolished. When I lead tours through Terezin, I go to at least show people where it stood. I at least have a key from its door, which is no longer, and its lock, which is no longer, which I always carry on me.

And one more thing often reminds me of it. After the war, my mother took the marble slab that was on the table to Prague. At first she had it on the table in the kitchen, then she put it out on the balcony, and finally I had a plaque for a gravestone made out of it; the names of my mother and brother are on it, and I also had them add my father, even though he's not buried there, and has no grave, and his ashes are just scattered somewhere. Now the name of my sister-in-law, recently deceased, is going to be added to it, too, and in time my wife and I as well.

My parents argued terribly in Terezin - about food. We all lost weight in Terezin, but my mother used to say that especially Father had. His clothes were hanging off him, and so she tried to give him more food. Which is why he was always angry. He said that it was out of the question. My mother worked hard in the garden, while my father didn't work manually, he sat in an office, and for that reason, too, it was unacceptable for him to eat Mother's portion. But my mother put one over him. When she was putting food on the plates, she gave herself more and him less. Father was already automatically switching the plates, because he thought that Mother was, as always, putting more food on his plate. By switching them, he actually ended up with more food. When we then remained alone in Terezin, my mother told me that Father had never found out the truth.

Once my brother came home with a few grits in his pocket, because he'd been transporting a sack that had been torn. Maybe he helped it along a tad. The grits spilled out, and Mother crawled around on the floor and gathered up each individual grit. Food was truly precious. When my brother used to come home after work, my mother would regularly say to him: 'Honza dear, don't go anywhere, lie down so you don't get hungry!' That's because he'd often pick up a heel of bread - of course for him, anything less than half a loaf was the heel - heft it in his hand, and ask: 'Mom, can I eat this heel?' Well, and that would for example be his ration for half the week.

The Terezin Council of Elders is sometimes criticized for not putting up resistance upon finding out what was happening in the East. That they continued to dispatch transports, that they didn't rebel, didn't resist the Germans. But I can put myself in their shoes, I'm able to imagine their fear for their lives. They lost them anyways, yes. But how could have they known that in advance? That's something you know after the fact. I'm sure that up to the end, they said, believed, hoped, that if they won't be an irritation, they'll survive.

In my opinion, the possibility of some uprising was completely illusory. It would have been heroic, but in that situation, when Jews didn't have weapons at their disposal, but on the contrary, at their backs had Germans from the Sudetenland, from Litomerice... I also heard my former colleague, a Jew, who's of the opinion that Jews shouldn't have boarded the transports at all, because the Germans didn't have that many soldiers and policemen to catch them all. And it didn't at all occur to him where they would have lived? If they would've returned to their original homes, in a while they would've rounded them up again. Pitch a tent somewhere? In the countryside? In a forest? Plus what would have those people lived on, where would they have gotten money from? Where would they get food coupons from? Every month they issued different ones. And identification, this was checked often. Or clothes. Let's say that an adult person could take his own clothing with him. But for a child that's constantly growing.

But also you had to count on the fact that Czechs inform on people. Alas. Not all of them, there were also those that hid Jews and rebels, but there weren't enough of those. Would it be possible to hide 170,000 Jews like this? When the Germans caught someone who was for example in the resistance or was hiding some partisan, did they execute him?

Of course, we witnessed the so-called 'beautifications' of Terezin. I remember that there were tents containing war production in the Terezin town square, which was for the greater part of my stay there. When Terezin was being beautified, they removed the tents, the fence, too, and put in a lawn and planted flowers. I also remember there being a café in Terezin, where you could get melta, and where some sketches, cabarets, took place.

In the corner of the square was a music pavilion, which interested me the most. Two bands used to play in it, one of them played swing. Up till then I didn't know swing, we weren't allowed to have a radio, and the second one played symphonic music. That was more familiar to me, that I knew from earlier. The local orchestra was roughly the size of a chamber orchestra, and played all sorts of things. I really liked the drummer, who not only played on the tympani and beat a small and big drum, but also had a harmonica and a triangle and some sort of gong and chimes... He was constantly playing something, and I liked that a lot, just like the music itself.

They would, for example, play the 'Ghetto March.' Later, after the war, I found out that it had actually been Julius Fucíks's 'Florentine March.' Why they renamed it the 'Ghetto March' I don't

know, but perhaps they didn't want the name of Julius Fucík to be heard. [Fucík, Julius (1903 - 1943): a Czech writer, journalist, politician, literary and theater critic and translator. Executed by the Nazis in 1943.] Because that was not only the name of the Terezin bandleader, but also of a Communist journalist, his nephew.

My father and brother were members of the Terezin mixed choir. My father had already been singing in a choir before the war, and now he continued in it. They met about twice a week. I used to like going to their performances, I saw 'The Bartered Bride' about three times, and 'The Kiss' perhaps even five times. In 'The Bartered Bride' I really liked the comedians with the trumpet and drum. They also put on Verdi's 'Requiem,' and I admired Rafael Schächter, who, when he was playing the piano and didn't have his hands free, conducted with his head. I'd never seen anything like it before - actually, I'd never seen any sort of concert before, all I probably knew were the organ and choir from church.

Culture was a significant part of life in Terezin. That was precisely what distinguished life in Terezin from other concentration camps: people tried, in quotation marks, to continue in their prior lives. Family life may have been seriously disturbed, because families mostly didn't live together, but despite that, they tried to get together as much as possible. Especially culture was for us a reminder of times when we'd still lived a normal life.

Another manifestation of the desire for a normal life were visits. I know that my parents often met with the Auerbachs, who they knew from before the war. Mr. Auerbach also worked on staff, he and his wife had gone on the same transport as my father. Because food was scarce and there wasn't anything to offer guests, everyone always brought something along with him. The desire to lead a normal life in Terezin was admirable. There, it was still possible. People were still trying to remain human.

My brother was going out with one girl in Terezin, and the story of their relationship is a very sad one. I think her name was Lixi, her last name I don't know. She was a bit younger than my brother, and had a hump. She had beautiful long hair, was very kind and her parents even arranged a wedding for them. It, of course, wasn't officially valid, weddings from Terezin weren't officially recognized. Lixi then left on a transport. I think that as a hunchback, she immediately went into the gas. Whether my brother told his future wife about that, that I don't know.

In Terezin we tried to celebrate holidays. We celebrated birthdays, but there wasn't too much gift-giving, there wasn't anything to give. So I for example made gifts. Once I gave my mother, probably for Christmas, a New Year's card. On it was Libuse's prophecy with a picture of the Prague Castle. I didn't have any example to work from, I remembered the panorama only vaguely, and so I drew some towers against the sky. And underneath: 'Behold, I see a great city, whose fame will touch the stars.' My mother likely didn't even know it, because she'd never studied Czech history, but I don't think it mattered. The main thing was that she had something from me. I'm also delighted when my granddaughter draws something for me. That's the thing that's nice about it, when a person feels that no one gave a child advice, that it expressed itself on its own.

As far as religious holidays go, Chanukkah is a family holiday, but how could have one celebrated family holidays in Terezin? I remember Passover. In 1943, Rabbi Feder 20 came to our 'Heim' to perform a service. During Passover you're supposed to eat root vegetables. But where to find those in April, in Terezin? Under different circumstances, they'd be grown in a greenhouse, but there

were no greenhouses in Terezin. And if there were, then for Germans, not for us. So I remember that Rabbi Feder brought us these skinny little parsnips and skinny little carrots. And all the while he sang: 'Elbeneybe, elbeneybe, elbeneybe, zuzi chad'kad'kad'oo...' What it means, I don't know. I'd never heard it before nor ever again after that. I guess it was important for me somehow, I don't know how, I don't know why.

There were about 35 of us boys there. Those of us that had a cap put a cap on their heads, others used a handkerchief or their hand. I'd been christened, but I didn't say that I won't celebrate Passover, after all, it was still the same God. For Jews, for Christians, and for Muslims. My mother told me many times, that I returned from Terezin as a child with an old man's head. Probably she was right.

Our whole family lived together from May until September 1944, when my brother left. At the end of October of that same year my father also left. He left on the last transport from Terezin, on 28th October 1944, and apparently died on 30th or 31st October 1944. The entire staff, who went into the gas without any selection, left on the last wagon of that transport. The Germans probably wanted to get rid of witnesses, even though everything was finally exposed anyways. Three weeks later, the gas chambers were blown up, so my father was one of the last people to die in this way. For the next 30 years, up until she died, my mother was a widow.

My mother and I remained, alone, but Grandma Fischer used to come visit us regularly. Almost every day, my mother and I would say to each other that when the war ends, my father and brother will return and we'll all be together again. In those peculiar circumstances in which my mother and I lived alone, without my father and brother, a very singular relationship developed between my mother and me, one which I very much like to recall.

My mother would leave for work early in the morning, when I was still asleep, and when she returned home late in the afternoon, I'd be tired and asleep again. So I began saying that we lived like those two that don't like each other - how I came by this comparison I don't know, because I didn't know any such couple. Neither for a long time after the war was I able to comprehend how people who don't like each other could live together, or even how a father and mother could get divorced and abandon their family!

After some time my mother began having some female health problems. I didn't understand it, but I knew that she was bleeding. Dr. Klein then operated on her, and so she needed to eat well. By coincidence, at that time they were issuing marmalade in the commissary, and Miss Porges allowed me to scrape out the already scraped-out marmalade barrels for myself. So I lowered myself to the bottom of both barrels, and scraped them out right down to the wood, so thoroughly that I eked out a full pot of marmalade from them. I was miserable from that work, because I was all sticky from marmalade, but my mother indulged herself, and was constantly telling me that I'd saved her life. I was embarrassed, because you don't say that to little boys. My mother used to say that even long after the war. Back then I actually wasn't at all little any more, even though I wasn't an adult yet either. As I mentioned earlier, my mother also used to say, after the war, that I'd returned as a child with an old man's head.

Being embarrassed for an adult was always especially awkward for me. Once I experienced greater embarrassment than ever before, which was when my mother and grandmother told me to go get a haircut. The barber was across the street, but because in the morning I'd out of habit wet my hair

before combing it, because back then I had a 'mattress' on my head which was hard to comb when it was dry, the barber told me that he couldn't cut wet hair. So I came back 'empty-handed.' Just my grandma was home, who was upset, and because just then it was tomato season and my mother always brought some home, Grandma stuck three tomatoes in my hands, to give to the barber.

So I set out once more, and as soon as I arrived, I clumsily gave him the three tomatoes, because I'd never 'bribed' anyone before. I immediately saw something unbelievable: the barber 'broke' in half as if he'd cracked, sat me down with deep bows into a barber's chair and began fawning over me, cutting, dusting, it's a wonder he didn't shave my smooth child's face, and finally he also sprayed me with something, and then bowing accompanied me to the door, where he once again bowed deeply, as if I was some sort of princeling. What three tomatoes could accomplish in Terezin - apparently at that time he'd seen them again for the first time in a long time. I was terribly embarrassed for him, and will never forget this experience.

I then moved into the larger part of our room, as they'd put Mrs. Hellerová and Mrs. Tumová into the smaller one. Mrs. Hellerová was the aunt of the last Jewish elder, Mr. Vogel, an engineer, who died a few years ago, she herself has been long dead. Initially Mr. Vogel had been head of the Terezin plumbers, Petr Seidemann apprenticed with him. I remember that once in the Magdeburg barracks a plank fell into the latrine and got stuck there, and so they lowered Mr. Vogel on a rope into that pipe to bring up the plank. Then he had to go wash right away, because he was very dirty and stank terribly. Otherwise, Mrs. Hellerová played solitaire, Napoleon's Square. I don't remember the rules precisely anymore, but she always laid out the cards while saying that this year the war would finally be over. I'd look on, and occasionally give her a bit of advice. Sometimes it worked out, sometimes not.

Starting 16th June 1944, when I turned thirteen, I had to start working, because back then compulsory labor started at thirteen, and I've still got my time book from back then. At first I worked in the food commissary, where Mrs. Baschová was in charge, and when she left on a transport, Miss Porges took her place. She was completely new there, so I and one older 'colleague,' Mrs. Neumannová, taught her what and how things were done in the commissary.

Liberation

My last workplace in Terezin were the ramparts, where I worked with other boys and girls. Our main activity was pulling up a pail of water hanging by a rope from a pulley, which we would fill in a stream that ran between the ramparts, in times of danger the space between the ramparts was supposed to be flooded with water from the Ohra River, but that never took place. We then poured the water into watering cans and watered the gardens with it. I was still in the gardens when we were liberated.

That long-awaited day came on 8th May 1945. It was already almost evening, I was standing by the road that passed by Terezin, and was watching the cars with German soldiers that were running away. Someone threw a hand grenade in our direction from one of them, but luckily nothing happened and the grenade didn't explode. The Germans were gone, about a half-hour's silence ensued, which was interrupted by the arrival of the Red Army.

Terezin was being liberated by a mixed army, cars, tanks, which had a tough time turning a 90 degree turn, galloping by us came a soldier on a brewery mare. The mare slipped on the cobblestones, but regained her balance and galloped on. Can you imagine what we were feeling? Finally the day we'd wished for since the beginning of our suffering had arrived. I stood there with the others, and we were roaring like wild animals in the jungle. I until midnight, the others greeted the liberators with hollering and celebrated the end of the Terezin ghetto perhaps until morning!

What came next? One day this, the next day that... Terezin was liberated, but despite that we couldn't leave it -in the ghetto a typhus epidemic was raging, brought by prisoners from the death marches 21. A quarantine was declared, and doctors, mainly from the Red Army, had their hands full quelling the danger. I remember an army ambulance, quite decrepit with age, that was constantly criss-crossing Terezin. A doctor or medic with a glass eye used to ride in it. But despite these unpleasant things, I remember this time as being full of euphoria from new-found freedom. On the square in front of the former barracks - a remnant of the beautification - Jewish electrical technicians had stationed a radio truck, which played dance music and broadcast radio news. Back then people were posting obituaries that 'after twelve years, the Great German Reich had finally died, to the great delight of those left behind' in Terezin, too.

Even though almost 60 years have passed since the Terezin ghetto ended, I meet up with it in one way or another very often, especially from the time I started going to schools to talk about Terezin, and Czech Television broadcast a documentary called 'A Magazine Named Domov.' Thus, after long years I met with friends from 'Heim 236' who I had thought were long dead. Recently I met a cousin of my friend Jirka Lagus from 'Heim 236.' I showed her our magazine, Domov, where I'd drawn him picking fleas out in the hallway in front of the 'Heim.'

Even though nothing all that bad really happened to me - I survived, experiences from Terezin keep coming back to me time and time again. I constantly have to think about friends that didn't have that kind of luck, who never returned. I feel that I owe them something. I constantly think of those little children who were carried by their unsuspecting mothers along with them into the gas chambers. On various occasions thoughts about the suffering and destruction of so many human lives awaken in me again, and so it seems to me that for me, the Holocaust won't end until I die. A psychiatrist told me that it's a guilt complex. I guess so. I feel a great responsibility for my actions to those who died, I know that I can disappoint them.

Shortly after the war, my mother also told me about how she'd met Kurzawy, a Sudeten German, who'd been the head of agriculture in Terezin. I don't think he ever hurt anyone, just addressed them familiarly and good- heartedly expressed his superiority. He used to see my mother daily, so he knew her well, and when he saw her that time, he deftly took of his hat, bowed, and in German said: 'I kiss your hand, your ladyship!' Times had changed...

My time at the convalescence home

Exactly a month after the liberation, June 8th, Czech Jewish children left Terezin for convalescence homes, set up for them in the former chateaus of Baron Ringhofer in Kamenice and Stirin by Prague. There, I one day got a letter addressed in handwriting that I knew very well - it was my brother's. First my mother wrote, that she's terribly happy, that our little Honza had returned, and all that remained was for Father to return, and we'll all be together again. Then my brother wrote, I saved the letter, but to this day I know what it said off by heart:

'My dear brother! Today I returned from Kaufering and went to have a look at our house, and by utter chance I found Mom there. Eat lots of dumplings, so that I won't recognize you when Mom and I come to visit you! Alas, I don't know anything about Dad.'

I don't remember the regime in the convalescence home much anymore. I know that we had to wash dishes, I have this one peculiar memory of this. I had this one friend there, Alfred Holzer was his name. He was a bit older than I, and his father had been the Terezin fire chief. When they had drills, I'd go watch them, and so I knew Mr. Holzer. Once he and I were washing dishes together in Kamenice. He put a plate on the tips of his fingers, spun it around like this, and the one that fell and didn't break got a gold, or silver medal. If it broke, bad luck, it got nothing. Once he broke a whole pile of plates like this right when a caretaker walked in. We said that he'd accidentally dropped them. Alfred later graduated from medicine, and after 1968 he emigrated. In 1993 the guys from Grade 9 had a met up, and I also took part in their reunion. Fredy was among them, already laughing at me from a distance. I told him this anecdote, and he was recording it with a movie camera, he didn't remember doing it at all.

At first, boys and girls from Terezin were in Kamenice together. But then the management began to have qualms regarding that sort of coexistence, so we boys moved to Stirin. I remember one girl, I don't remember her name anymore, and I really have no idea anymore what possessed her, but she began provoking me and wanted to fight me. I didn't even like fighting with boys, much less girls. In Terezin I used to brawl, that's true, but I had to brawl to preserve some sort of right to exist, otherwise everyone would have dared to come at me. But I'd never fought with girls. And when this one came and started provoking me, I still remember to this day thinking about where I should slug her. Not the stomach, not below the belt, that's not allowed, for sure not the head. So where? In the breasts, that's inappropriate. So I hit her with all my might in the shoulder and walked away. And with this I got her to then leave me alone.

From Stirin, I remember the fishpond, which was right by the chateau. There, some Max from the Lieder-Kolben family taught me to swim. He was a swell guy, probably around 17, later I never saw him again.

If I'm not overly mistaken, I was in the convalescence home until 15th August 1945. In the morning they said that I was going home, so I went. The others still stayed there, I was supposed to go because I was supposed to start school in September, and was supposed to devote the coming time to 'civilize' myself in some fashion. I surprised Mother, she had no idea that I was going to appear that day. It was right around noon, and my mother was all flustered because she didn't know what to feed me. Finally she pan- fried some cooked potatoes in some butter for me, and I remember to this day how I was sitting at the table and saying: 'Mom, these potatoes are so good...'

Our post-war life

My mother was unhappy, because she thought that I'd be eating well in that convalescence home. But there wasn't much food there, and we used to make fun and say that they were saving up for World War III. We didn't have much food, and neither was it particularly tasty, I remember us once ostentatiously eating paper, saying we were hungry. But that was more of a provocation. So I finally properly ate my fill with my mother at home, and in the afternoon I went with my friends to the cinema, which was around the corner, to see the movie 'San Demetrio [London].'

My mother was also very much influenced by her war experiences. She used to say that the only language that she really knew well, German, she hated. Which is, of course, nonsense, how can someone hate a language? A language can't be responsible for something. She was brought up in German, studied in German and didn't learn Czech until before the occupation, and never properly. She also used to say that Germans should be castrated. I understood it, it was an expression of her desperation.

My mother actually never enjoyed her life. She saw World War I, then had tuberculosis, then there were worries as to what my father would do when he lost his job, well, and then suddenly the occupation was here, war... Even before it broke out here, there was news about what was happening in Germany, in Vienna, Crystal Night 22. And finally my mother lived as a widow. Later, when German friends of mine used to come visit, who'd certainly done nothing wrong, because they'd been little children at the time, she behaved very coldly towards them. I'd explain to them that they shouldn't be upset at her, that she simply couldn't deal with it.

After the war we didn't return to our apartment. Right at the end of the war, some people that had been bombed out moved into it. My mother was issued this tiny little apartment, one small room plus another one with a kitchenette, about 16 square meters all told. The kitchenette had only a sink and a hotplate, in the other part of the room there was a table plus room for a bed that she had brought over from Terezin. My brother and I lived in the larger room. Then my brother got married and moved out. Then I got married and moved out, so Mother remained there alone.

When the Benes Decrees 23 began being enforced, we were terribly afraid that they would also deport us, as Germans. Everyone who'd registered themselves as being of German nationality before the war were, according to the Benes Decrees, supposed to be deported, and whether or not they'd been imprisoned in a concentration camp wasn't taken into account. Only those that proved they'd been anti-Fascists. But where could a Jew who'd been locked up in a concentration camp find that sort of proof? Those decrees didn't take this into account. My mother didn't know what nationality our father had registered us as in 1930. In the end it came out that as Jews, and so we were allowed to stay here.

What would have moving to Germany meant for us? After all, we weren't Germans. For a long time, neither I nor my mother wanted to speak German! For Jews who'd returned from the concentration camps, it must have been horrible, living among those that hated them, and they on the other hand hated Germans. You can't live like that. I didn't return to the German language until 1956, when I met some Germans from East Germany. Then in 1964 I was on business in East Germany, during Christmas market time, and I heard little children nattering daddy, mommy, buy me.... and at night my childhood years with my father and mother returned to me, it was quite horrible...

My brother left Terezin for Auschwitz, and from there onwards to Kaufering, a branch camp of Dachau 24. There was a secret airplane factory there, but my brother worked for the funeral commando, he stood in waist-deep water and buried corpses. He caught tuberculosis from this. He actually only talked about what he'd experienced immediately after his return, with our mother. His experiences were so terrifying that he never wanted to return to them. After the war he always had a big complex that he hadn't gotten a proper education. Yet he was very talented and would definitely have had the abilities for it. But he didn't get the opportunity.

Before the war he managed to only finish kvarta [equivalent of Grade 9], and after the war he took a one-year business course. Then he had to start working, because I had an orphan's pension, my mother a widow's, but who would have supported him? Maybe that after the war he wasn't even inclined to further studies, the most important things he learned in that one-year course, and his head was probably too pumped dry for anything more.

As a 30 percent invalid, he was quite badly off. I remember once going swimming with him in the Vltava River. He had a very hard time swimming across, even though it was quite narrow. Though after the war he did do canoe racing and skiing, it apparently didn't agree with him. He got a job with Kovospol, a foreign trade company.

Actually, after the war my brother became the head of the family. He used to fill out various questionnaires and forms, that's something I couldn't do. So it was he, my brother, who decided that we wouldn't emigrate, that we'd stay here. My mother's two sisters lived in Australia, and Grandma moved there, too. But I wouldn't be able to get used to any other country, my home is here. My mother and brother were also of the same opinion.

In September 1945 I started attending academic high school in Prague, in the Vinohrady quarter. I started in tercie [Grade 8], and luckily they postponed my entrance exam until the end of the year, because how would I, with three grades of elementary school, have passed exams on material from first and second year of high school? It wasn't only a boys' high school, there were girls that attended it as well, however, not in our class. Up until oktava [Grade 12] I would only meet girls in the hallway, it was only then that three girls joined our class.

In Grade 8 there was a boy in our class who was a hunchback. But it wasn't only his back that was deformed, but also his soul. That's the worst, because then people are nasty, they're actually crippled twice. Once during Russian class I was called up to the blackboard, he stuck out his foot and I tripped. I never fought, but I had returned from Terezin with the notion that one couldn't put up with this type of thing, so I went back and gave him such a whack that his little head bounced off his hump. For Russian we had this one Russian lady, we called her 'baryshnia,' and she started at me, aren't I ashamed of hitting a cripple. And I told her with eyes ablaze, that in that case he shouldn't have stuck out his foot. I guess I was quite inflexible, I'd brought back knowledge and experiences with me from Terezin that to a significant degree determined my behavior, which, however, for people without similar experiences was incomprehensible.

After the war we were no longer members of the Jewish community. My mother did consider converting back to Judaism, but the ceremony that she would have had to undergo, for them to take her back, discouraged her from it. While when I was becoming a member of the community, they weren't interested in whether I'd been christened or not. The wanted to know my mother's origin. The reason my mother wanted to return was that she wanted to be together with Father. But I used to tell her that she'd meet up with him one way or the other. I think that what a person has in his heart is more important than what religion he formally belongs to.

When I was in my graduating year, I wanted to study production at FAMU [Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague]. I knew, however, that this subject wasn't taught at FAMU. Despite that, when there was a presentation on what subjects it was possible to study there, I went to have a look at it. And so I hear: camera, dramaturgy, production! I woke up and went to the lecturer to ask about the details. Not only he, but no one knew what exactly was going to be

taught. I was the first who applied for that year, and they accepted me.

My other classmates were recruited from the ranks of those that had unsuccessfully applied for other subjects. I must say, that my high school classmates' company didn't overly suit me. Especially with my experiences from Terezin, they seemed to me to be overly trite. Luckily, before I started attending, my mother had warned me that I'm not suited for that sort of society. And so later, when I didn't like it there, I couldn't really complain.

In 1953 I began participating in the Stavar [Builder] folklore ensemble belonging to the Faculty of Civil Engineering. My friends, classmates, brought me into the ensemble. It had started up the year before I arrived, in 1952, during the time Gottwald was in power, and still before the Slansky trial 25. It was this socialist ensemble, our hymn was the song 'Come along nation, loyal nation, with President Gottwald...,' but I didn't sing it. Up until about 1958, ensembles like this were very much in fashion, then they gradually declined, and around 1961 or 1962 our ensemble broke up.

The ensemble had several components, a vocal group, a dance group, an orchestra and a variety show group, which is where I was. The choir was the biggest, the orchestra and dance group were relatively small. When we were traveling to go perform somewhere, there were as many as a hundred of us. I did puppet theater there, and other various such tomfoolery for the amusement of others.

I enjoyed imitating various sound effects. I had actually always liked doing that, once in Terezin I sounded the all-clear for an air raid alert like that. Our courtyard had a mess window, and if someone came for their food and the air-raid siren announced the start of an alert, they had to wait there until the all-clear was sounded. Once, on a lark, I sounded the all-clear myself. Right then there was one old lady who'd come for her lunch resting at our neighbors', and when she heard my siren, she thought that the alert was over, and left. Luckily there was a guard at the gate, so he didn't let her go any further. Now, when I'm showing friends around Terezin, I take them to that courtyard, where the kitchen of course no longer exists, and 'our' house is also demolished, and I sound the end of an air raid like back then.

My wife

In the ensemble I met my future wife, Hana Mazánková, who sang in the choir. My wife always looked very young. When we met in 1953, she was 23, and I was 22. But I thought that she was around 13 or 14. I didn't talk to her at all, I thought she was a kid. Then once we were on an outing with the ensemble. We were divided up into groups, and I led one of the groups. We got a map, I had my own compass from home, so I was explaining something about it, and my future wife says: 'I know that.' And from where? 'From army training.' How can you have army training in high school? So that's how I found out that she's not a high school student, but that she's in 3rd year of university and is a year older than I.

Maybe she wouldn't have even married me, because at first she refused me. I'd bought a ticket for some folklore concert. I offered it to her, and she said no. But when a girlfriend of hers heard that, she rebuked her, my wife returned and said yes. I'd already made up my mind, that if no, then no. I took it as a fact and wasn't going to plead with her. I don't think I'd ever fight because of a woman, I guess I wouldn't be up to it. To me it's not dignified. I'd either have remained a bachelor, or I'd have found someone else, even thought that's not likely, I don't know if I would have had the

courage to ask out another girl.

My wife didn't have anything to do with Jews, except for marrying one. And also that she had a Jewish girlfriend during childhood. When they wanted to go for a walk together, that friend of hers would lend her a star 26, she had two of them, and off they'd go. After the war, her friend didn't return.

Hana attended family school, then took a one-year Alumnus of Labor Courses, which was instead of graduation. Then she started attending the University of Political and Economic Sciences, which was then dissolved, and so she transferred to the Faculty of Philosophy, where she graduated.

She got a work placement at some physical education school in Nymburk, where she was supposed to teach Marxism-Leninism. She refused that, worked as a secretary, and then went to the Pioneer House and worked in the mass- media department. Later they let her go during a reorganization, that though she was a party member, she'd become obdurately anti-Party. So she got a secretarial job in Chemapol, a company that exported chemical products. She wasn't there long either, she then worked for the House of Culture in Branik in Prague 4, but after 1969 27 there were purges, like everywhere, and she had to leave and started working at the Regional Cultural Center for Prague West. There she stayed until 1990.

Our wedding, which was at the Old Town Hall, was quite a big embarrassment, because the ensemble arranged a little surprise for us, and plenty of them participated. After the usual ceremony at the town hall, they strung up a clothesline, hung various things on it, and I had to take them down. All the while, I was sticking the clothespins in my pocket, like I'd been used to doing when I used to gather the laundry for my mother, and everyone laughed at that. There were foreigners standing around and filming everything, and one foreigner called out to me, for me to kiss the bride, which I didn't want to do, but in the end did it. We delayed the other weddings by perhaps as much as half an hour.

Normally, however, I wasn't used to making fun of serious things. I can't stand practical jokes and black humor. Once in the ensemble, a friend borrowed some money from me, and returned it to me all in 10 haler coins. He thought that that was a good joke, but I'm not into things like that, because people are capable of even killing for money. And that's not a joking matter. Like food isn't a joking matter. One colleague of mine thought it a good joke to stick a brick or some slippers into my bag along with my food. I told him that next time I'd kill him, that food is sacred and you don't treat it that way. Terezin taught me that.

After the wedding, my wife and I went on vacation. We were pulling along a wagon with our suitcases, and I heard some locals saying: 'What's this? Are they brother and sister? Or father and daughter?' It didn't at all occur to them that we might be husband and wife. And when we were in Rujan, my wife and son and I went to borrow a beach basket. At that time I was 44, my wife was 45, and our son 12, but the old sea dog that lent us the basket thought that they were my children.

Once, when my wife was taking the streetcar home late at night, the conductor apparently asked her whether she wouldn't catch hell for coming home so late. Or when I was doing military training, and she was with her parents in a restaurant for lunch, the waiter asked her parents whether they didn't want a children's portion for her - at that time she was 30. Which is why my wife has always gotten along very well with children, for them she was actually their peer.

After school, I started working at the Prague Central Television Studio. I'd already been working there during summer holidays. Then I transferred over to the news offices. There I spent six years, and always experienced something new. For example, when Gagarin 28 was in Prague, I was preparing a live broadcast from the airport. Gagarin flew into space in 1961, so this anecdote took place sometime shortly thereafter. I was the first to arrive at the airport, and the last to leave, because I wanted to be sure that everything was in order, even though by myself I probably wouldn't have saved anything.

Yuri Gagarin was this pleasant young man. When people broke through the cordons and ran towards the plane, he was completely taken aback by it. Everything was being filmed by a camera driving in front of him. He probably wasn't used to something like that, and even in our neck of the woods, spontaneous crowds of people like that were unheard-of. So we weren't properly prepared for them. The technicians weren't able to chase them all away from the camera, which occasionally tipped over, so parts fell out of it. The picture disappeared, and on TV nothing could be seen. I was in the broadcast van, and couldn't do anything, well, it really was quite hectic back then. Then Gagarin went to the Castle, where he was given some state award. I was there, too, but luckily that was already a calmer affair.

In 1961 they transferred me into the development and building of CST [Czecho-slovak Television], where I then worked as a consultant on projects for the new TV center in Kavci Hory. I was regularly and frequently required to travel to Bratislava to consult on projects. Sometimes I lived in Bratislava like a pauper, because when a hotel wasn't available, they'd put me up with someone. I lived in a servant's room, which, however, wasn't available until 10pm, so I had to wander around the city. Most of the time I couldn't go to the cinema, there weren't any movies, so what to do? It was very depressing. Some guys were smacking their lips, that they'd pick up all sorts of women, they envied me, but I was homesick.

I actually like home best of all. For me, home is an irreplaceable part of life. My wife likes going to restaurants, but not I. I don't think you should make a show of food. For me food is a matter of survival, not entertainment. On business trips I perhaps went to some restaurants, but even so, many times I preferred to make it myself in my room somewhere, and just ate something cold. My brother once told me: 'Well, I know, we only go to restaurants when we have to.'

The concentration camp may have affected my brother differently, but even worse. He told me how once he went to see the movie 'Some Like It Hot.' It's this comedy and gangster movie, and the film's opening scene is from real life. One gang kills another gang on St. Valentine's day in a garage, and then what happens after that is that a couple of men accidentally saw it, and the gangsters try to catch them. My brother told me that with this scene, the film was over for him, that he couldn't watch it any further. To shoot people in a garage... What he'd gone through in Auschwitz and Kaufering returned to him again.

My brother worked in Kovospol, in foreign trade. In 1958 they wanted to fire him, that he had relatives abroad. That was sort of an echo of the events in Hungary 29. But back then that was the last quarter where that had to be approved by the National Committee. The National Committee didn't agree, because my brother was a 30% concentration camp invalid, so they had to leave him there, but transferred to a different position. First to the transport department, then the accounting department. As I later found out, because he was capable, he still unofficially managed foreign

trade from the accounting department, but wasn't allowed to travel anywhere, and actually wasn't anything. Then they thought of him again in 1962, when they were starting to introduce computer technology, so they pulled him out of the accounting department. Back then, computers were punch-card machines.

Then he had his first heart attack; in 1964 my son was born, and when he was coming up to our place to have a look at him, he had serious problems. They diagnosed him with angina pectoris. In 1968 he had a second heart attack and went on disability pension, which was lucky for him, because in the purges after the help of the brotherly armies 30 he would definitely have been thrown out, he was on the plant's board. In 1976 he had a third heart attack, of which he died. They knew that he had tuberculosis, but during the autopsy they found out that he had it on his kidneys, and that his adrenal glands were infected, that he suffered from Addison's disease.

My brother actually didn't get much out of life, he didn't have a normal life. Except for the two years when he worked in foreign trade and could travel. His wife was also Jewish. She was named Hana Kirschnerová, was from Prague, and managed to stay in Terezin until the end. How, that I don't know. After getting married, our wives had the same names, so when my wife would call her, she'd say: 'Hana Glasová here, Hana Glasová please.' My sister-in-law is also no longer alive.

In 1951 they had their first son, Petr, then a second son, Tomas. Both of them are engineers, and live in Prague. Petr has two children, a daughter and a son. Tomas also has two children from his first marriage, and another two stepchildren and one of his own from his second one. My brother never spoke with them about the concentration camp, what they know, I told them.

When my brother worked in that foreign trade company, he was in the Party 31 for some time, then when he went on disability no one was really interested whether he was or wasn't. I was never in the Party. They probably would have pressured me when I worked in news, because when someone was in a management position, he had to be a party member. But before the pressure started, they'd transferred me to construction at Kavci Hory, and there they didn't care about me, because I was no longer a manager. I had them record in my cadre materials that I wasn't interested in a management position, so whoever was above me could remain calm, he knew that I wasn't interested in his position, and I was also left in peace.

At work I was reliable, but as far as private life goes, completely useless for my colleagues. I purposely made myself into as unsociable a person as I could, and thus achieved the fact that no one invited me anywhere. I was left in peace and that was the most important thing for me. I also realized that as a Jew, I had to be very careful to not mix myself up in any funny business.

But once it happened that they started investigating me, without telling me what it was about. When I asked, they said: 'But you know very well why.' Well, those two colleagues behaved like the Gestapo towards me. It wasn't until a long time had passed that during the meeting of one commission it was explained to me that a colleague and I hadn't written in some form, that while we'd been shooting a reportage about Christmas in a mountain chalet, we'd been given accommodations and food for free. Then they themselves realized that we didn't have anywhere to write it, because the form didn't have a place for it. Nevertheless, my colleague lost his job anyways. Not I, because they knew that I was honest.

In 1960 they caught Eichmann 32 in Argentina. A colleague of mine at the time, also a Jew, the foreign editor Vladimír Tosek, lent me a book about Eichmann's kidnapping. I read it, and because I myself didn't remember Eichmann much, I wanted to see if my mother knew the name. There was a lot written about Eichmann in the papers, but my mother didn't read papers, didn't have a TV, and on the radio listened only to music broadcasts from Vienna, so she didn't know anything about what was going on with him. I came over to her and asked: 'Mom, does the name Eichmann mean anything to you?' She turned deathly pale, and just whispered, almost inaudibly: 'That's transports, that's transports.'

I realized that whenever Eichmann appeared in Terezin, that meant that there'd be more transports. That was his responsibility. His office was grandly named the Office for Jewish Emigration. When they were gassing Jews, that was supposed to be that emigration. I then felt terribly sorry that I had tried my mother like that, even so many years after the war, it was still an absolutely living memory for her.

Once my mother and I were in Terezin, and saw a movie being shot there, 'Daleká Cesta.' We knew that it was only a movie shoot, my mother knew it, too, but when a gendarme walked by, an actor that was playing a gendarme, my mother turned pale and asked him: 'You're a gendarme?' He had a gendarme's uniform, so for her he was a gendarme.

When I used to go for trips about the Czech countryside, many times I conversed with my father, but never heard an answer. I needed advice. Then later, I sometimes got it mixed up, and spoke to God. Despite the fact that I don't believe in him. I guess there I was also talking to my father, or to myself. Because with decent people, what's God is their conscience. Precisely that a person talks to himself, and things about what he's done. Whether it's right or not. Whether it's allowed or not. American gangsters had no problem having someone murdered, and then sent a wreath to his funeral and crossed themselves in church. I don't think it had anything to do with God. And German soldiers had 'GOTT MIT UNS' ['GOD WITH US'] written on their belts. In World War I, they had the slogan 'GOTT STRAFE ENGLAND' ['MAY GOD PUNISH ENGLAND']. Why should God punish England? They'd commandeered him. And what if Jews, Christians, Protestants, Muslims also commandeered God? And all the while, it's the same God. And which one of them had the right of first refusal?

I think that talking to God is a private matter, no one needs a middleman for that, if he wants he'll talk to him himself. When a person goes on a date, he also doesn't need an advisor or interpreter. Years ago, I was in Susice, and suddenly in a shop window, I saw an engraving showing Abraham sacrificing Isaac. I had a son, I had Terezin behind me, and so I thought to myself, that God can't after all want anyone to sacrifice his son as a mark of his obedience. That's something that people thought up. I can't imagine it. After Terezin, thoughts like that send a shiver up your spine.

My mother was lucky to not be there for my brother's death. He died three years after her, at the age of 52. His last words to me were: 'When will I see you again?' I said I was going to Germany on business, and that when I return I'll call him. Of course, I never did call him again. My brother died in this strange fashion. He was supposed to take the radio to get repaired. It was hot, he wasn't feeling well, and he wanted to first got to Pruhonice, where he always felt well. But because he had the radio in his car, he said he'd go to the repair depot first. On the way, somewhere in Vrsovice, he ran into a former lady colleague from Kovospol. So he picked her up, and she invited him up to her place for a coffee. And he died in her apartment of a heart attack.

That lady didn't know what to do, she didn't know his home number, and it was only sometime in the evening, when they were, of course, already looking for him at home, she remembered the phone book, called and told them what had happened. When I returned, my wife told me what had happened to us. And I then cried like a little boy. I realized that I was the last of our Glas family, a witness of Terezin...

Glossary

1 Terezin/Theresienstadt
A ghetto in the Czech Republic, run by the SS. Jews were transferred from there to various extermination camps. The Nazis, who presented Theresienstadt as a 'model Jewish settlement,' used it to camouflage the extermination of European Jews. 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 café, a bank, kindergartens, a school, and flower gardens were put up to deceive the committee.

2 Mussolini, Benito (1883-1945)
Italian political and state activist, leader (duce) of the Italian fascist party and of the Italian government from October 1922 until June 1943. After 1943 he was the head of a puppet government in the part of Italy that was occupied by the Germans. He was captured and executed by Italian partisans.

3 Joseph II (1741-1790)
Holy Roman Emperor, king of Bohemia and Hungary (1780-1790), a representative figure of enlightened absolutism. He carried out a complex program of political, economic, social and cultural reforms. His main aims were religious toleration, unrestricted trade and education, and a reduction in the power of the Church. These views were reflected in his policy toward Jews. His 'Judenreformen' (Jewish reforms) and the ',Toleranzpatent' (Edict of Tolerance) granted Jews several important rights that they had been deprived of before: they were allowed to settle in royal free cities, rent land, engage in crafts and commerce, become members of guilds, etc. Joseph had several laws which didn't help Jewish interests: he prohibited the use of Hebrew and Yiddish in business and public records, he abolished rabbinical jurisdiction and introduced liability for military service. A special decree ordered all the Jews to select a German family name for themselves. Joseph's reign introduced some civic improvement into the life of the Jews in the Empire, and also supported cultural and linguistic assimilation. As a result, controversy arose between liberal-minded and orthodox Jews, which is considered the root cause of the schism between the Orthodox and the Neolog Jewry.

4 Anschluss

The German term "Anschluss" (literally: connection) refers to the inclusion of Austria in a "Greater Germany" in 1938. In February 1938, Austrian Chancellor Schuschnigg had been invited to visit Hitler at his mountain retreat at Berchtesgaden. A two-hour tirade against Schuschnigg and his government followed, ending with an ultimatum, which Schuschnigg signed. On his return to Vienna, Schuschnigg proved both courageous and foolhardy. He decided to reaffirm Austria's independence, and scheduled a plebiscite for Sunday, 13th March, to determine whether Austrians wanted a "free, independent, social, Christian and united Austria." Hitler' protégé, Seyss-Inquart, presented Schuschnigg with another ultimatum: Postpone the plebiscite or face a German invasion. On 11th March Schuschnigg gave in and canceled the plebiscite. On 12th March 1938 Hitler announced the annexation of Austria. When German troops crossed into Austria, they were welcomed with flowers and Nazi flags. Hitler arrived later that day to a rapturous reception in his hometown of Linz. Less well disposed Austrians soon learned what the "Anschluss" held in store for them. Known Socialists and Communists were stripped to the waist and flogged. Jews were forced to scrub streets and public latrines. Schuschnigg ended up in a concentration camp and was only freed in 1945 by American troops.

5 Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia

Bohemia and Moravia were occupied by the Germans and transformed into a German Protectorate in March 1939, after Slovakia declared its independence. The Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was placed under the supervision of the Reich protector, Konstantin von Neurath. The Gestapo assumed police authority. Jews were dismissed from civil service and placed in an extralegal position. In the fall of 1941, the Reich adopted a more radical policy in the Protectorate. The Gestapo became very active in arrests and executions. The deportation of Jews to concentration camps was organized, and Terezin/Theresienstadt was turned into a ghetto for Jewish families. During the existence of the Protectorate the Jewish population of Bohemia and Moravia was virtually annihilated. After World War II the pre-1938 boundaries were restored, and most of the German-speaking population was expelled.

6 Dimitrov, Georgi (1882-1949)

A Bulgarian revolutionary, who was the head of the Comintern from 1936 through its dissolution in 1943, secretary general of the Bulgarian Communist Party from 1945 to 1949, and prime minister of Bulgaria from 1946 to 1949. He rose to international fame as the principal defendant in the Leipzig Fire Trial in 1933. Dimitrov put up such a consummate defense that the judicial authorities had to release him.

7 Fire at the Reichstag

On 27th February 1933, the Reichstag in Berlin burned. The National Socialists blamed it on opposition forces, primarily on members of the German Communist Party. Not even now, years later, is it known how it started and who was involved. The fact is that shortly after the fire broke out, a Dutchman by the name of Marinus van der Lubbe was arrested at the scene. Shortly thereafter, the leader of the German Communist Party, Ernst Togler, and three Bulgarian

Communists, Vasil Tanev, Blagoj Popov and Georgi Dimitrov, were charged along with him. All were arrested, charged and underwent harsh interrogation. (Source: Kronika 20. století, Fortuna print Praha, pg. 462)

8 Gottwald, Klement (1896-1953)

His original occupation was a joiner. In 1921 he became one of the founders of the KSC (Communist Party of Czechoslovakia). From that year until 1926, he was an official of the KSC in Slovakia. During the years 1926 - 1929 Gottwald stood in the forefront of the battle to overcome internal party crises and promoted the bolshevization of the Party. In 1938 by decision of the Party he left for Moscow, where until the liberation of the CSR he managed the work of the KSC. After the war, on 4th April 1945, he was named as the deputy of the Premier and the chairman of the National Front (NF). After the victory of the KSC in the 1946 elections, he became the Premier of the Czechoslovak government, and after the abdication of E. Benes from the office of the President in 1948, the President of the CSR.

9 Forced displacement of Germans

One of the terms used to designate the mass deportations of German occupants from Czechoslovakia which took place after WWII, during the years 1945-1946. Despite the fact that anti-German sentiments were common in Czech society after WWII, the origin of the idea of resolving post-war relations between Czechs and Sudeten Germans with mass deportations are attributed to President Edvard Benes, who gradually gained the Allies' support for his intent. The deportation of Germans from Czechoslovakia, together with deportations related to a change in Poland's borders (about 5 million Germans) was the largest post-war transfer of population in Europe. During the years 1945-46 more than 3 million people had to leave Czechoslovakia; 250,000 Germans with limited citizenship rights were allowed to stay. (Source: http://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vys%C3%ADdlen%C3%AD_N%C4%9Bmc%C5%AF_z_%C4%8Ceskoslovenska)

10 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 organized by the Jewish communities either.

11 Great Depression

At the end of October 1929, there were worrying signs on the New York Stock Exchange in the securities market. On 24th October ('Black Thursday'), people began selling off stocks in a panic from the price drops of the previous days - the number of shares usually sold in a half year exchanged hands in one hour. The banks could not supply the amount of liquid assets required, so people didn't receive money from their sales. Five days later, on 'Black Tuesday', 16.4 million shares were put up for sale, prices dropped steeply, and the hoarded properties suddenly became worthless. The collapse of the Stock Exchange was followed by economic crisis. Banks called in

their outstanding loans, causing immediate closings of factories and businesses, leading to higher unemployment, and a decline in the standard of living. By January of 1930, the American money market got back on it's feet, but during this year newer bank crises unfolded: in one month, 325 banks went under. Toward the end of 1930, the crisis spread to Europe: in May of 1931, the Viennese Creditanstalt collapsed (and with it's recall of outstanding loans, took Austrian heavy industry with it). In July, a bank crisis erupted in Germany, by September in England, as well. In Germany, in 1931, more than 19,000 firms closed down. Though in France the banking system withstood the confusion, industrial production and volume of exports tapered off seriously. The agricultural countries of Central Europe were primarily shaken up by the decrease of export revenues, which was followed by a serious agricultural crisis. Romanian export revenues dropped by 73 percent, Poland's by 56 percent. In 1933 in Hungary, debts in the agricultural sphere reached 2.2 billion Pengoes. Compared to the industrial production of 1929, it fell 76 percent in 1932 and 88 percent in 1933. Agricultural unemployment levels, already causing serious concerns, swelled immensely to levels, estimated at the time to be in the hundreds of thousands. In industry the scale of unemployment was 30 percent (about 250,000 people).

12 Anti-Jewish laws in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia

In March 1939, there lived in the Protectorate 92,199 inhabitants classified according to the so-called Nuremberg Laws as Jews. On 21st June 1939, Konstantin von Neurath, the Reich Protector, passed the so-called Edict Regarding Jewish Property, which put restrictions on Jewish property. On 24th April 1940, a government edict was passed which eliminated Jews from economic activity. Similarly like previous legal changes it was based on the Nuremburg Law definitions and limited the legal standing of Jews. According to the law, Jews couldn't perform any functions (honorary or paid) in the courts or public service and couldn't participate at all in politics, be members of Jewish organizations and other organizations of social, cultural and economic nature. They were completely barred from performing any independent occupation, couldn't work as lawyers, doctors, veterinarians, notaries, defense attorneys and so on. Jewish residents could participate in public life only in the realm of religious Jewish organizations. Jews were forbidden to enter certain streets, squares, parks and other public places. From September 1939 they were forbidden from being outside their home after 8pm. Beginning in November 1939 they couldn't leave, even temporarily, their place of residence without special permission. Residents of Jewish extraction were barred from visiting theaters and cinemas, restaurants and cafés, swimming pools, libraries and other entertainment and sports centers. On public transport they were limited to standing room in the last car, in trains they weren't allowed to use dining or sleeping cars and could ride only in the lowest class, again only in the last car. They weren't allowed entry into waiting rooms and other station facilities. The Nazis limited shopping hours for Jews to twice two hours and later only two hours per day. They confiscated radio equipment and limited their choice of groceries. Jews weren't allowed to keep animals at home. Jewish children were prevented from visiting German, and, from August 1940, also Czech public and private schools. In March 1941 even so-called re-education courses organized by the Jewish Religious Community were forbidden, and from June 1942 also education in Jewish schools. To eliminate Jews from society it was important that they be easily identifiable. Beginning in March 1940, citizenship cards of Jews were marked by the letter 'J' (for Jude - Jew). From 1st September 1941 Jews older than six could only go out in public if they wore a yellow six- pointed star with 'Jude' written on it on their clothing.

13 People's and Public schools in Czechoslovakia

In the 18th century the state intervened in the evolution of schools - in 1877 Empress Maria Theresa issued the Ratio Educationis decree, which reformed all levels of education. After the passing of a law regarding six years of compulsory school attendance in 1868, people's schools were fundamentally changed, and could now also be secular. During the First Czechoslovak Republic, the Small School Law of 1922 increased compulsory school attendance to eight years. The lower grades of people's schools were public schools (four years) and the higher grades were council schools. A council school was a general education school for youth between the ages of 10 and 15. Council schools were created in the last quarter of the 19th century as having 4 years, and were usually state-run. Their curriculum was dominated by natural sciences with a practical orientation towards trade and business. During the First Czechoslovak Republic they became 3-year with a 1-year course. After 1945 their curriculum was merged with that of lower gymnasium. After 1948 they disappeared, because all schools were nationalized.

14 Winton, Sir Nicholas (b

1909): A British broker and humanitarian worker, who in 1939 saved 669 Jewish children from the territory of the endangered Czechoslovakia from death by transporting them to Great Britain.

15 Bergen-Belsen

Concentration camp located in northern Germany. Bergen- Belsen was established in April 1943 as a detention camp for prisoners who were to be exchanged with Germans imprisoned in Allied countries. Bergen- Belsen was liberated by the British army on 15th April, 1945. The soldiers were shocked at what they found, including 60,000 prisoners in the camp, many on the brink of death, and thousands of unburied bodies lying about. (Source: Rozett R. - Spector S.: Encyclopedia of the Holocaust, Facts on File, G.G. The Jerusalem Publishing House Ltd. 2000, pg. 139 -141)

16 Sudetenland

Highly industrialized north-west frontier region that was transferred from the Austro-Hungarian Empire to the new state of Czechoslovakia in 1919. Together with the land a German-speaking minority of 3 million people was annexed, which became a constant source of tension both between the states of Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia, and within Czechoslovakia. In 1935 a Nazi-type party, the Sudeten German Party financed by the German government, was set up. Following the Munich Agreement in 1938 German troops occupied the Sudetenland. In 1945 Czechoslovakia regained the territory and pogroms started against the German and Hungarian minority. The Potsdam Agreement authorized Czechoslovakia to expel the entire German and Hungarian minority from the country.

17 Hatikvah

Anthem of the Zionist movement, and national anthem of the State of Israel. The word 'ha-tikvah' means 'the hope'. The anthem was written by Naftali Herz Imber (1856-1909), who moved to Palestine from Galicia in 1882. The melody was arranged by Samuel Cohen, an immigrant from

Moldavia, from a musical theme of Smetana's Moldau (Vltava), which is based on an Eastern European folk song.

18 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.

19 Prager Tagblatt

German daily established in 1875, the largest Austro- Hungarian daily paper outside of Vienna and the most widely read German 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, Egon E. Kisch, Theodor Lessing and others. The last issue came out in March 1939, during World War II the paper's offices on 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.

20 Feder, Richard (1875 - 1970)

Head provincial rabbi in Brno. Awarded the Order of Tomas Garrigue Masaryk, 3rd Grade, in memoriam on 29th October 2002, for exceptional merit in the sphere of democracy and human rights.

21 Death march

In fear of the approaching Allied armies, the Germans tried to erase all evidence of the concentration camps. They often destroyed all the facilities and forced all Jews regardless of their age or sex to go on a death march. This march often led nowhere and there was no specific destination. The marchers received neither food nor water and were forbidden to stop and rest at night. It was solely up to the guards how they treated the prisoners, if and what they gave them to eat and they even had in their hands the power on the prisoners' life or death. The conditions during the march were so cruel that this journey became a journey that ended in the death of most marchers.

22 Crystal night [Kristallnacht]

Nazi anti-Jewish outrage on the night of 10th November 1938. It was officially provoked by the assassination of Ernst vom Rath, third secretary of the German embassy in Paris two days earlier by a Polish Jew named Herschel Grynszpan. Following the Germans' engineered atmosphere of tension, widespread attacks on Jews, Jewish property and synagogues took place throughout Germany and Austria. Shops were destroyed; warehouses, dwellings and synagogues were set on fire or otherwise destroyed. Many windows were broken and the action therefore became known as

Kristallnacht (Crystal Night). At least 30,000 Jews were arrested and sent to concentration camps in Sachsenhausen, Buchenwald and Dachau. Though the German government attempted to present it as a spontaneous protest and punishment on the part of the Aryan, i.e. non- Jewish population, it was, in fact, carried out by order of the Nazi leaders.

23 The Benes Decrees

a designation for a set of decrees issued by the president in exile during World War II, and during the first postwar months in the Czechoslovak Republic. The presidential decrees were an expression of the exceptional wartime and post-war situation, and the non-existence of the Czecho-slovak legislative assembly (parliament). They were primarily concerned with questions of assumption of power in liberated territories, the renewal of prewar governmental bodies and the creation of new ones, the status of German and Hungarian residents of Czecho-slovak territory, punishment of wartime collaboration, confiscation of enemy property and the nationalization of key industries. All the decrees were prepared and approved by the Czecho-slovak government, signed by the President of the Republic, and the minister of the corresponding resort, and in the case of constitutional decrees, by all members of the government; most of them were effective throughout the whole country. From 21st July 1940 to 27th October 1945, more than 100 presidential decrees were issued; among the most significant belong:

- a decree concerning the administration of property belonging to Germans, Hungarians, traitors and collaborators, and concerning the invalidity of certain legal procedures concerning property from the time of the occupation (19th May 1945)
- a decree concerning the punishment of Nazi criminals, traitors and their collaborators, and concerning special people's courts (19th June 1945)
- a decree concerning the National Court (19th June 1945)
- a decree concerning the confiscation and distribution of real estate belonging to Germans, Hungarians, traitors and collaborators (21st June 1945)
- a decree concerning the modification of Czecho-slovak citizenship of persons of German and Hungarian nationality (2nd August 1945)

24 Dachau

The first Nazi concentration camp, created in March 1933 in Dachau near Munich. Until the outbreak of the war prisoners were mostly social democrats and German communists, as well as clergy and Jews, a total of approx. 5,000 people. The guidelines of the camp, which was prepared by T. Eicke and assumed cruel treatment of the prisoners: hunger, beatings, exhausting labor, was treated as a model for other concentration camps. There was also a concentration camp staff training center located in Dachau. Since 1939 Dachau became a place of terror and extermination mostly for the social elites of the defeated countries. Approx. 250,000 inmates from 27 countries passed through Dachau, 148,000 died. Their labor was used in the arms industry and in quarries. The commanders of the camp during the war were: A. Piotrowsky, M. Weiss and E. Weiter. The camp was liberated on 29th April 1945 by the American army.

25 Slansky trial

In the years 1948-1949 the Czechoslovak government together with the Soviet Union strongly

supported the idea of the founding of a new state, Israel. Despite all efforts, Stalin's politics never found fertile ground in Israel; therefore the Arab states became objects of his interest. In the first place the Communists had to allay suspicions that they had supplied the Jewish state with arms. The Soviet leadership announced that arms shipments to Israel had been arranged by Zionists in Czechoslovakia. The times required that every Jew in Czechoslovakia be automatically considered a Zionist and cosmopolitan. In 1951 on the basis of a show trial, 14 defendants (eleven of them were Jews) with Rudolf Slansky, First Secretary of the Communist Party at the head were convicted. Eleven of the accused got the death penalty; three were sentenced to life imprisonment. The executions were carried out on 3rd December 1952. The Communist Party later finally admitted its mistakes in carrying out the trial and all those sentenced were socially and legally rehabilitated in 1963.

26 Yellow star - Jewish star in Protectorate

On 1st September 1941 an edict was issued according to which all Jews having reached the age of six were forbidden to appear in public without the Jewish star. The Jewish star is represented by a hand-sized, six-pointed yellow star outlined in black, with the word 'Jude' in black letters. It had to be worn in a visible place on the left side of the article of clothing. This edict came into force on 19th September 1941. It was another step aimed at eliminating Jews from society. The idea's author was Reinhard Heydrich himself.

27 Political changes in 1969

Following the Prague Spring of 1968, which was suppressed by armies of the Soviet Union and its satellite states, a program of 'normalization' was initiated. Normalization meant the restoration of continuity with the pre-reform period and it entailed thoroughgoing political repression and the return to ideological conformity. Top levels of government, the leadership of social organizations and the party organization were purged of all reformist elements. Publishing houses and film studios were placed under new direction. Censorship was strictly imposed, and a campaign of militant atheism was organized. A new government was set up at the beginning of 1970, and, later that year, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union signed the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, which incorporated the principle of limited sovereignty. Soviet troops remained stationed in Czechoslovakia and Soviet advisers supervised the functioning of the Ministry of Interior and the security apparatus.

28 Gagarin, Yuri Alexeyevich (1934-68)

Russian cosmonaut, pilot- cosmonaut of the USSR, colonel, Hero of the Soviet Union. On 12th April 1961 he became the first man flying into space on the Vostok spaceship. He was involved in training of spaceship crews. He perished during a test flight on a plane. Educational establishments, streets and squares in many towns are named after him. A crater on the back side of the Moon was also named after Gagarin.

29 1956 in Hungary

It designates the Revolution, which started on 23rd October 1956 against Soviet rule and the communists in Hungary. It was started by student and worker demonstrations in Budapest and

began with the destruction of Stalin's gigantic statue. Moderate communist leader Imre Nagy was appointed as prime minister and he promised reform and democratization. The Soviet Union withdrew its troops which had been stationed in Hungary since the end of World War II, but they returned after Nagy's declaration that Hungary would pull out of the Warsaw Pact to pursue a policy of neutrality. The Soviet army put an end to the uprising on 4th November and mass repression and arrests began. About 200,000 Hungarians fled the country. Nagy and a number of his supporters were executed. Until 1989 and the fall of the communist regime, the Revolution of 1956 was officially considered a counter-revolution.

30 August 1968

On the night of 20th August 1968, the armies of the USSR and its Warsaw Pact allies (Poland, Hungary, East Germany and Bulgaria) crossed the borders of Czechoslovakia. The armed intervention was to stop the 'counter-revolutionary' process in the country. The invasion resulted in many casualties, in Prague alone they were estimated at more than 300 injured and around 20 deaths. With the occupation of Czechoslovakia ended the so-called Prague Spring - a time of democratic reforms, and the era of normalization began, another phase of the totalitarian regime, which lasted 21 years.

31 Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSC)

Founded in 1921 following a split from the Social Democratic Party, it was banned under the Nazi occupation. It was only after Soviet Russia entered World War II that the Party developed resistance activity in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia; because of this, it gained a certain degree of popularity with the general public after 1945. After the communist coup in 1948, the Party had sole power in Czechoslovakia for over 40 years. The 1950s were marked by party purges and a war against the 'enemy within'. A rift in the Party led to a relaxing of control during the Prague Spring starting in 1967, which came to an end with the occupation of Czechoslovakia by Soviet and allied troops in 1968 and was followed by a period of normalization. The communist rule came to an end after the Velvet Revolution of November 1989.

32 Eichmann, Adolf (1906-1962)

Nazi war criminal, one of the organizers of mass genocide of Jews. Since 1932 member of the Nazi party and SS, since 1934 an employee of the race and resettlement departments of the RSHA (Main Security Office of the Reich), after the "Anschluss" of Austria headed the Headquarters for the Emigration of Jews in Vienna, later organized the emigration of Jews in Czechoslovakia and, since 1939, in Berlin. Since December 1939 he was the head of the Departments for the Resettlement of Poles and Jews from lands incorporated into the Reich. Since mid-1941, as the Head of the Branch IV B 4 Gestapo RSHA, he coordinated the plan of the extermination of Jews, organized and carried out the deportations of millions of Jews to death camps. After the war he was imprisoned in an American camp, he managed to escape and hid in Germany, Italy and Argentina. In 1960 he was captured by the Israeli secret service in Buenos Aires. After a process which took several months, he was sentenced to death and executed. Eichmann's trial initiated a great discussion about the causes and the carrying out of the Shoah.