Toman Brod

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Prague
Czech Republic
Interviewer: Lenka Koprivova
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Mr. Toman Brod lives with his wife in a cozy and very tastefully furnished apartment near the center of Prague. In his study, where the interviews took place, he has many books, for the most part historical literature, for Mr.

Brod is a historian. In his research, he has devoted himself primarily to the subject of Czechoslovak-Soviet relations, the Czechoslovak resistance movement in the West during the time of World War II, the Holocaust and World War II as a whole.

Recently he had a book published, which he himself considers to be his life's work: 'The Fatal Mistake of Edvard Benes 1939-1948: Czechoslovakia's Road Into The Soviet Yoke.'

Mr. Brod is capable of talking about his life in a very interesting and captivating manner. Doing this interview with him was a great pleasure for me.

- **My family background**

I never knew my grandparents on my father's side. They died before I was born, and so everything I know about them, I know only from stories. My grandfather was named Alois Brod and was likely born in the first half of the 19th century. He lived in a village a little ways away from Caslav, it's called Vrdy-Bucice, and there he had a mixed-goods store. It was definitely a large store, perhaps the largest in the vicinity.

You could buy anything there: textiles, shoes, tools, sweets, groceries. Behind the store there were also stables and also many fields belonged to it. My grandfather had a lot of employees. In fact, everything I know about him, I know from one of them, from Mrs. Anna Kopska, who later worked as a cook for my parents as well, and then after the war lived with me and took care of my daughter.

My grandfather probably wasn't very religiously inclined, allegedly he used to have ham brought to him in the washroom, so that my grandmother wouldn't see it, for she was more Orthodox. My

grandfather had siblings; for sure I know that he had a brother, Josef, whose descendants are still alive today, some here, some in America.

Mrs. Kopska also used to tell me that my grandfather used to sit in front of the house, and on Sunday, when children would be on their way to church, he would give out sweets to them. And he used to say, 'look, what a grimy child that is, if it washed itself, how beautiful it would be.'

My grandmother was named Marie, nee Friedlanderova. She probably also came from Bucice or somewhere around Caslav. She was a housewife and her faith was most likely stronger than my grandfather's. She cooked kosher, didn't eat pork, but whether she attended the synagogue, that I don't know. She probably also had siblings, but I don't know anything about them.

Both of them had German as their mother tongue; however, both of them spoke very good Czech with their employees. They had four or five children, later it was a very widely branched out family. I don't remember all of them though, because afterwards my father didn't associate with a number of them.

The sons were named Arnost, which was my father, Jindrich, he later lived in Pardubice and had a fountain pen factory, he often visited us, then Alfred, who was mentally ill and died in Bohnice. My father also had a sister, but he didn't associate with her, I myself didn't meet her until in Terezin 1. She was named Hermina.

My grandparents on my father's side died sometime in the 1920s, before I was born. My father then took over their store, for some time he and my mother ran it, but then he sold it and they moved to Prague. After the war I went to Vrdy-Bucice to have a look around, and at that time that store was still there, in fact after the war you could still see the sign, Alois Brod, of course now it's completely different.

My father was named Arnost Brod and was born on 28th November 1878 in Vrdy-Bucice. I think that his mother tongue was German, but he spoke Czech without any problems. Until the end of his life he wrote in kurent [also called black-letter script], that pointy German lettering, so even when he was writing a Czech letter, he had sharp edges, he didn't draw arches, so from this I judge that he went to German schools, after all in those days that was normal.

For sure, he only had a high school education, he had no title. His religious inclinations were probably no great shakes. If they had been, he certainly would have led us in that direction, which though didn't happen. He was never in the army, he didn't even have to join up during World War I, and that was most likely because he was important for the war effort, because he worked in supply.

When my father moved to Prague, that was sometime in the second half of the 1920s, he became a grain wholesaler. He sold and bought wheat from farmers, and in Prague he sold it on the commodities exchange. From time to time, once a week, he went to Caslav on business, he had this big shopping bag and the farmers would bring him eggs, butter, various vegetables...

About my grandparents on my mother's side, I don't know much either. I never even knew my grandpa [Eduard Pick], he died before I was born, that was also sometime in the 1920s. My grandmother [Anna Pickova, nee Kernova] I faintly remember from my childhood, she died when I

was three.

When I was small, I wasn't very interested in them. And when I did start to become interested, there wasn't anyone left who could tell me something about them. I know that my mother's father was named Eduard Pick. He married Anna Pickova, born Kernova, and lived in Ledec nad Sazavou, where they had a sawmill. So they were industrialists, you could say. Probably they also spoke German.

They had several children: the sons Jindrich, Karel, Jiri, and the daughters Olga, that was my mother, Stefa and Anna. After their father's death, the sons took over the sawmill and together continued in the lumber business; they did business in Prague and vicinity and their sawmill was, I think, in Satalice. To more easily integrate into Czech society, they changed their name, they became the Petrovskys. That was sometime after World War I.

The oldest brother was named Karel. He married a Christian woman; she was a bit of a clotheshorse. During the war he stayed in Prague, because he somehow managed to have himself declared a child born out of wedlock, via some fraud he got a different birth certificate, so he wasn't considered a Jew, and after February 1948 2, he moved away to Brazil.

Jiri Petrovsky was born in the year 1897, so he was seven years younger than my mother. He had two wives; his first wife died, she was some Italian woman, and he probably met her when he was at the front in Italy during World War I. His second wife was named Anna and was born in 1907. From his first marriage he had a daughter, Vera, who was here during the war, she wasn't considered to be Jewish, so survived the war and died afterwards in America, because she had leukemia. With Anna, his second wife, who was a Jewess, Jiri Petrovsky had a little boy, Ivosek [Ivo], who was born in 1935, and together they were transported to Lodz, where their trail ends in the fall of 1941.

Jindrich Petrovsky was born in the year 1891. His wife was named Ruzena and they had two children together, Eva and Mario. They were also a relatively rich family, they owned some buildings in Prague, later we even lived with them. Jindrich Petrovsky didn't survive the war, the rest of his family did.

Anna Ungerova-Pickova married and then lived in Vienna. She had a son, Otto, who, after she died in the 1920s, returned to Prague. Him I remember very well, we saw each other often, for example, he used to come and visit us at our summerhouse. Later he was also in Terezin and Auschwitz. He survived, and after the war he married his Christian girlfriend. Otto was this kindly person; he had a personality very similar to my mother's. He died in the year 1984.

Stefa Pickova was born in the year 1886 and was mentally handicapped. She died in the year 1944 in Riga.

- **Growing up**

My mother was named Olga Brodova, nee Pickova. She was born on 29th January 1890 in Ledec nad Sazavou. Her mother tongue was also German I think, but she spoke Czech perfectly, her handwriting was also clear. When she spoke, the same as when she wrote letters, she crossed over

fluently from one language to the other. Both languages were completely normal back then. Unfortunately, I don't know much about my parents' youth, I was born very late, and when I was a child, these things didn't interest me.

I don't know when and where my parents met, but their wedding was in July of 1912; they were married in Bucice, by a rabbi. My mother then also helped in the store. In the 1920s, they moved to Prague. We were by no means rich, but we did live in a nice building on the riverfront; I'd say that we were part of the well-situated middle class.

My parents waited a long time for children. They had already been together 15 years when my brother Hanus was born in 1927. At that time, they had already given up hope that they could have a family. My father also already wanted to retire, but when children came, he had to once again restart his business, to support the household.

I think that my mother managed to get pregnant when they were on vacation in Italy, that somehow the local climate favorably affected her. So my brother Hanus was born in 1927 and I was born two years after him, on 18th January 1929.

My father was a somewhat conservative type, who was of course glad that he had sons, because at his age he had no longer hoped that he would have any offspring. So he was very proud, he took care of us, gave us precise orders as to what we could do and what we couldn't. He checked what time we were going to sleep, checked how we were bathing ourselves.

He was a person who, as long as he had the time, took very good care of his family. Unfortunately he had very little time; he was basically already an old person. When he died at the age of 60, everyone said that he had already been an old man, that his time had come.

Today that's nonsense, 60-year-old people are fundamentally very active, but as I say, already when he was 50 he wanted to retire, and didn't do so only because we were born. Well, so I have him in my memory as a person who of course tried to somehow play with us, but I think that at his age he didn't understand children much any more.

My mother was a woman with a completely calm disposition, who was flustered by absolutely nothing. The children could romp about and yell and she would sit after dinner at the table and crack nuts. And the children could demolish the house, or more precisely the hallway, furniture, and it didn't faze her. But, of course, our father was somewhat more nervous, hot-tempered.

When our parents argued, it was mainly in German, so that we couldn't understand them. But eventually we understood them anyways. Our mother was very gentle, kind-hearted, I remember her as being a very gentle and kind-hearted woman.

As a teenager, I didn't always act very nicely towards her, that's of course also true, but later she showed herself to be, that's already another history, as a very courageous woman. Even though she never worked, in those horrible conditions in Terezin that she had to experience, she showed herself to be a very adaptable woman; she worked as a nurse for mentally and physically handicapped children.

My mother was a very passionate card player. She had lots of lady friends, who just like her, played bridge. It was this social circle, that came to visit her, or she would go with them to coffee houses, because they mainly played in coffee houses.

This society of women met at our place for various tea parties, afternoons, various women's matters were discussed. Some of these ladies spoke Czech, some German and they would fluidly switch from one language to the other.

With some of these lady friends of hers, who had children, we used to go to our summerhouse, as summer holidays were then called. It's interesting that they were all assimilated Jewish families. Really, our family friends were again only Jews.

We didn't associate much with our mother's siblings and their families. Yes, we knew about each other, but they were more these bigwigs, they moved about in different social circles. They owned buildings, were members of auto clubs, rode horses... In contrast to this, my father's brother Jindrich visited us often.

His wife Berta was also Jewish, they adopted a child together. My uncle had a fountain pen factory in Pardubice; however, it didn't do very well, and so he would always come to borrow money from my father. He was a very kind-hearted person, whom we always respected and loved. He was younger than our father, and so he also acted differently toward us.

When our father died, we lived close to each other in the Old Town, we would regularly go for Sunday walks with him, he would show us Prague's sights. Uncle Jindrich died along with Aunt Berta in Auschwitz, but their daughter perhaps wasn't even in a concentration camp, and later immigrated to Australia.

My brother Hanus was two years younger than me. For sure he had a better disposition, for I was a terrible, annoying child. I was a poor loser, even today, when I lose at chess, it bothers me, but if in those days I for example lost in some children's sport competition, I was really a very unpleasant child. While he was prudent, would try to calm me down in various possible ways, that it's only a game, and so after a time the anger would leave me.

Hanus, I think, was that contemplative, scientific type. Here I have one of his books of composition exercises that he wrote when he was 15 years old. They're these philosophical, essay-like ponderings. Even back then one could see that he was a contemplative person, that he was interested in the future.

For example, here he writes: 'About my life I would just like to write that I was born...other details are unfortunately unknown to me, I don't know when and where I will die, what sorts of interesting incidents I will yet live to experience. Hanus didn't live to experience many more interesting incidents.

I would suggest, that I be given this task again after a certain number of years, then I will be able to write more, having behind me a larger part of my life and with that also a larger number of interesting experiences.' Already as a boy, he was interested in politics and political-historical things;

I think that in this respect he was quite serious for his age, and also in this respect stood quite above other boys with his interests and his knowledge. Then, during the war, when he was 16, 17, he was perhaps part of some Communist cell in Terezin.

Otherwise, I think that my brother and I were this normal pair. Sometimes we fought like cats and dogs, like all siblings sometimes fight or egg each other on. But we of course also played ping-pong together, soccer, went swimming in the summer, skated; I really do think that we were a normal pair.

We neither loved each other a lot, nor did we hate each other. Well, of course in childhood it's a different relationship than in adulthood, so maybe that relationship would have changed. Back then I was jealous of Hanus, he was older, stronger, so I tried to keep up with him. We had mutual friends and so on.

Our family was largely assimilated. We practically didn't know anything about any Judaism. Though I was circumcised from childhood, that's about all. I never visited a synagogue during the entire time of the First [Czechoslovak] Republic 3, I first found out about Judaism in 1938, when various anti-Jewish measures [see Anti-Jewish laws in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia] 4 began, and when there already was a difference between Christians and Jews.

Perhaps because of their experiences with the Hilsner Trial 5, they told us: you should identify yourselves as Czechs, that will give you a certain amount of protection, but a Jew will always have problems. Probably because of that. I don't know, I never talked about it with them; I didn't have time, because they all died before I was old enough.

An inseparable part of our family was certainly also Anna Kopska, our cook. Anci [Anna] was born in 1892 in Vrdy-Bucice, and when she was 17 she started working for my grandfather. Then she also worked for my parents, and after the war she took care of me and my family.

During the time of the First Republic it worked that way, that every middle-class family, like ours was, had a governess and cook. We got especially lucky with our Anci. Not only because of her being an excellent cook, but also because of her immense devotion and good-heartedness that helped us very much during the war.

Mrs. Kopska was a widow. Her marriage is a mystery, apparently she had been married for only a short time. Her husband was some coachman and died of tuberculosis. Anci never talked about it. But she had a son, Pepek, who she had when she was around 18, certainly still during the time of Austria [the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy].

When he died in the middle of the 1960s, he was something over 50. I don't know where he grew up, the first time I saw him was when he returned from the war as a grown man. One morning a stranger came over, I was home at the time, and suddenly I hear Mrs. Kopska greeting him.

Pepek then married, had a child and lived with his family in Zleby u Caslavy, where they built a house. Mrs. Kopska probably helped him out with it a lot financially, because she wasn't too happy that Pepek divorced a few years later, left the house to his wife and moved to Prague. But I remember the house in Zleby very well to this day; we used to go there during summer vacations, and that's where we were when we heard that my father had died.

A few years ago I went to Zleby to have a look, and I even met up with Pepek's ex-wife. Back then she had been a young, beautiful woman, now this old, hunched-over lady came out. Our meeting years later was interesting. Pepek worked in some factory in Prague, and when we left for Terezin, he and his mother took care of our apartment.

Of the things that Anci cooked for us, I'll for example never forget her blueberry dumplings. No one makes those any more these days. They were large dumplings, most likely from cottage cheese dough, and they had a very thin shell; it was an art to make them so that the shell didn't tear.

Another delicacy for me was her sauerbraten, also absolutely unrivalled. And her plaited Christmas cake, that probably doesn't even exist any more today. Maybe it wasn't only her recipe, but in general nothing made now can equal the Christmas cakes that were made before the war. They had an indescribable taste and indescribable aroma. When you broke them in half, the dough formed these little needles. And they were full of raisins and almonds and all kinds of goodies. So that was an amazing thing.

Tomato sauce! At our house we had tomato sauce with rice, but Kaja Marik, my childhood hero, ate tomato sauce with dumplings, so I asked Anci to also make it for me with dumplings. Her bread dumplings were absolutely superb. What I on the other hand didn't eat much of was cream of wheat.

That I only started to like when I was in Terezin, understandably so, but after the war I didn't like it again. And so my granddaughter, who as opposed to me likes it very much, pesters me at breakfast time to eat porridge with her. I also didn't eat fish, I didn't like those bones in them; for example at Christmas I would always have a schnitzel instead.

Mrs. Kopska made excellent schnitzels. Of course, we didn't eat meat every day; we also cooked ordinary foods, like for example spinach with eggs and potatoes, semlbaba. Potato salad! That's again something that no one can manage to make any more, she made it with her own homemade mayonnaise, and salami or ham was also put into it. And more things, all goodies. I liked hanging around the kitchen when Anci was cooking, and I always managed to get a taste of something. Like that sweet dough that you could scoop up with your finger and eat raw...The delicious marble cakes that Anci made!

I was a nervous child, so in the morning before going to school I didn't eat much, I'd perhaps only drink some white coffee or some tea. I got a mid-morning snack to take with me to school, which I didn't eat until around 10am, when my stomach began working. So our family for sure didn't eat breakfast all together, after all, my mother was mostly still asleep when we left for school. But we ate dinner together, my father if he was home, my mother always.

And that was already a certain ritual. We ate in the dining room, which was festively set, Mrs. Kopska served us... But Mrs. Kopska or the governess, didn't eat with us, they ate in the kitchen. It was this certain detachment that was observed, it was further expressed for example by my mother and father addressing Mrs. Kopska as Anna, while she addressed them as Milady and Sir. They addressed each other formally. We addressed Anci informally and for us she was Anci.

My father was practically never at home, so my mother was the head of the household. My mother never cooked, that wasn't proper for a well-to-do woman, though she did go do the shopping. She

took care of the shopping, and it wasn't any problem. She didn't carry any bags, she only picked out things in the store, paid, and they then delivered it to our apartment. In fact, we had a delicatessen right in our building where you could go shopping. My mother also took care of the finances, she kept the books.

The Prague of my childhood was an idyllic city. Though back then there were already cars in Prague, but what was that, a couple of cars here and there. In my time, there were still horses! I remember brewers' horses, coal merchants' horses, postal horses.

Prague was really this village, where you could normally walk down the street and crossing it was no problem, though even back then people said that it was congested, but if they would have seen what it looks like today...We lived on Palacky Nabrezi, that's between the Palacky and Jirasek bridges, today the Dancing House is on that stretch of riverfront.

We had a beautiful five-room apartment on the second floor of this burgher's house from the late 19th century, which stands there to this day. Our apartment had a children's room, then on the right side was a kitchen, on the left our parents' bedroom, then a dining room, a so-called gentlemen's room, used for receiving guests, and the last room was an office, used by my father to conduct his business affairs.

Our apartment had a beautiful balcony with a view out on the Vltava River and Hradcany [the Prague Castle]. Basically, it was a beautiful, pleasant, gracious apartment, and also very well furnished for the times. Not luxuriously, but nevertheless very well, comfortably.

My brother and I shared a room. Here we each had our own bed; our nanny slept in the room next to us. Here we used to play, had our toys, read...Otherwise we didn't walk about the apartment all that much. Into the dining room, to the bathroom, yes, of course, into the gentlemen's room only if there was company over, but otherwise we stayed in our room, where it was warm and where we had our world.

When I had the time, and time I used up quite a bit of, I would stand at the window and watch life on the Vltava River. There were still rafts on the river then, but already also steamboats. From where I was I could see two harbors, one was right under our windows, the second by the Jirasek Bridge. And one of my childhood amusements was to watch the steamships, I always hoped that an arriving steamboat would drop anchor at my harbor.

In the winter the Vltava would freeze over, there was a skating oval on it and we used to go skating there, we would also go for walks on it, for example we would take our sleds all the way to Vysehrad. Well, and then of course there was snow, in the winter Prague was full of snow. Prague was covered by snow each winter, and it was real snow, not mud, like it is today. So that was also a certain romance, a certain idyll.

Otherwise, Prague, fairs, well, that was a huge thing in those days, back then there were still those Czech fairs. Prague had more of them, but for me there were two main ones. They were held on Karlovo Namesti [Charles Square] twice a year, a Christmas fair and a St. Joseph's fair. There were various attractions, merry-go-rounds and magicians and a half-man, half-woman, animals, some monkeys, a shooting range and of course all sorts of goodies, especially that what we weren't allowed at home.

For example, we weren't allowed to eat speck sausages. If our father had seen us eating them, he would have had a stroke. But that was our greatest delicacy, to buy a sausage there for 50 halers. We did get some allowance, always when some acquaintance would come to visit, mainly Uncle Jindrich to come borrow money from our father, so when he would get it, he would give us a crown or two. In those days a crown was a huge amount of money, back then 5 halers would get you a gummy snake that you could chew, some candy for 10 halers, and for 50 halers those sausages.

We didn't even know what to do with a whole crown, what to spend it all on. Or the cotton candy, disgusting, all those were our delicacies. All around the park on Karlovo Namesti stood booths with attractions, and the mood was amazing, there was music playing everywhere, there were candles and the scent of frankincense...

I also loved roasted chestnuts, there were always old ladies standing outside with these locomobiles, round ovens with a smoking chimney, inside of which there were chestnuts roasting on a spit, and the old ladies sold them for a crown a bag. Now I buy chestnuts perhaps only when I go to Vienna; there they probably still have those old recipes, otherwise not.

And I also liked whipped cream and ice cream, that I could eat for breakfast, lunch and supper. But we weren't allowed to just go to any stand, our father first had to approve some confectioner and then we could shop there. Ice cream cost 50 halers a cone.

We loved fruit, melons, mandarin oranges, oranges, bananas; back then you could of course get all that. But we weren't some sort of free-spending family. Yes, we were well off, there was certainly no lack of money, but we didn't throw it around. When we got 50 halers to go to the fair, we were happy.

Our governess definitely had to account for each crown that she spent on us. Back then money was scarce, so we respected it; after all, we hardly ever got our hands on it. Everything that we needed was bought for us, so perhaps only when our uncle came to visit would we get a crown or two, but otherwise not.

I was a passionate collector of toy soldiers, back then these plaster soldiers were popular; I had a whole army of them. One cost about two or three crowns in the toy store, so when I saved, earned a crown here or there, I could go to the toy store and buy a soldier. Soldiers were also the best present that I could possibly get.

As was the custom in those days, our family also had a nanny. Back then the way it worked was that the children were given to the nanny to take care of, and she made sure they behaved, walked them to school and from school, went with them to the playground and for walks. We had several nannies, not all of them stuck it out with us, and neither did we stick it out with all of them. They were all Christian girls. We used to call them Miss, so I don't even know their names any more. The first left because she got married.

Then we had this robust lady, Krajcova she was named, she was very sports-oriented. She also left, our parents weren't happy with her. And then we had one, by then we were already bigger boys, around nine or ten, and she was German. She tried to teach us German, which we of course refused, because German was the language of our enemy.

We were ashamed of it when she spoke German to us, we forbade her to talk to us in German in front of our friends. I think that this nanny left when [the] Munich [Pact] 6 happened. With our nannies we went for walks, to the theater, played various games...Basically we got along, mainly when they didn't speak German to us in front of our friends. We had about five nannies, but these services ended in 1939, after our father died. There wasn't money for it any more, our mother kept a smaller household, so we said goodbye to that beautiful apartment.

Anci Kopska also took very good care of us. Not only would she cook or bake what we wanted, but for example I could go and knock on her door and say: 'Listen, I'd like, if you'd be so kind, for you to read me a bit from Bozena Nemcova 7.' So Anci would come, when she had the time, and read it to me. Whether she read for herself when she had time off, I don't know. I actually remember almost nothing of what she did in her spare time. I used to go to the kitchen only for food; otherwise I was in our children's room. She knitted, yes, a lot of that, maybe she occasionally went to see a movie, but otherwise I don't know.

- **School years**

Our school was on Pstrossova Street, in a building where in 1890 Eliska Krasnohorska's Minerva had been founded, the first Czech high school where girls could study. In our time though, it was a boys' school. This is because in those days children were educated separately; schools weren't co-ed like they are now. And also in other ways school in those days was completely different from how it is now.

In the first place, it was ruled by an absolutely natural and observed authority and discipline: there was such order that today's children would scarcely be able to imagine it. My impression is that today's teachers are more tamers than educators. Back then, whatever the teacher said, was law. Mr. Teacher said this, so I have to do it like this.

Of course in those days there already were also women teachers. But I think that they were all single, that they weren't allowed to be married. Basically they weren't supposed to have other responsibilities, so that their own children wouldn't take time away from teaching.

In school I liked for example drawing or composition. I think that I liked school as such. It was a duty that I understood in some way. Of course that I was glad when I didn't sometimes have to go, like every child is glad, but that it was some sort of shock for me to go to school, that certainly can't be said.

On the contrary, at the end of summer holidays we looked forward to returning to it, that again there would be boys that we played with the previous year, that maybe some new ones will arrive... The teachers addressed us by our last names.

As soon as I arrived at school in the first grade, I was Brod, and when the teacher called someone by his first name, that was an honor. He was the teacher's pet, he might then be addressed familiarly with a diminutive, but otherwise it didn't exist... And we of course envied him that.

Though we liked school, we also liked being ill. For one because we didn't have to go to school, but also because our mother, governess and Anci took very good care of us.

I remember there being some sort of difference between boys that were better and worse off, I do, however it wasn't in that we wouldn't be friends, that we wouldn't play soccer together, but when someone had a birthday, we always got together more with others from that middle class, as it were.

So a certain class aspect did exist. On the other hand, our teacher said to us: 'look here, we've got some poor children here, so maybe, if you can, at Christmastime bring some clothing or shoes that you don't need, some toys that you don't need, and we'll give it to the poorer children.'

Or I also know, that when the father of some boy left for Spain to fight for the Spanish Republic [see Spanish Civil War] 8, the teacher said: 'this boy here has no father, so if you're from those so-called better families, invite him over once a week for dinner.' So I know that one boy used to come over to our place sometimes for dinner. Like I said, if he knew how to play soccer, he was our friend, and no one cared if he was rich or poor.

And of course, it's true that we were big on sports, we were soccer fans, at least my brother and I were. We also actively played soccer, but with more enthusiasm than skill, we were fans of Sparta 9 and Slavia 10, we followed their performance, and that was something, when during the World Championship in 1934 in Italy, our soccer players reached the finals.

[Editor's note: the year 1934 brought great success to Czechoslovak soccer at the World Championship in Italy, although the Czechoslovak Republic lost 2:1 to the home team in the finale.] They lost, but it wasn't all fair. Then they got a hero's welcome in Prague: they arrived in an open coach and everyone covered them in flowers; I was there too.

Soccer players of those times weren't gladiators, millionaire slaves, that let themselves be sold back and forth for millions; they were people that really played for prestige and with enthusiasm, for the love of it. With patriotism. For them it was a real point of pride to represent Czechoslovakia in the international arena. In those days patriotism wasn't a cliche, it was a real, deep feeling.

I was a Sparta fan, Hanus a Slavia fan. In fact, before he died, our father bought my brother a Slavia and me a Sparta sweater. I knew the entire Sparta team roster, I had it hanging above my bed, and always on Monday our teacher, Mr. Pokorny, he was this older man with glasses, would come up to me and say: 'Brod, how did you end up on Sunday?' So I reported: 'Mr. Teacher, sir, we won.' I would say we. 'So you won? That's amazing news.' And so then I would describe to him how it was that we won.

We also read a lot. My brother and I used to fight over books. It goes without saying that we read books by Karl May, Robinson [Crusoe], Tarzan, Kaja Marik, all the books by Foglar... we devoured books. And we fought as to who would get to read a book first. We got books on birthdays and Christmas, it's not like today, when as soon as a child wants something, it gets it immediately.

In those days gifts were bought only at Christmas and for birthdays. Later we could also buy them with money we had made. My mother also read a lot. Our father, as I said, wasn't at home much, and when he did come home, I was maybe already asleep. Children didn't go to bed as late as today, at 11pm. At 8, that was it, bedtime. Our mother also used to give us the newspaper to read.

In the summer we used to go to a summer house. If I remember correctly, in the beginning it was only around Prague, when I was a small child we used to for example go to Revnice. The first bigger holiday event was Doksy, Mach Lake, then for a few years it was Libverda, that's near Liberec, where we went for about three years, but because it was in the border region, where it wasn't all that pleasant to be in the 1930s, we spent our last summer vacation, in 1938, at Mala Skala near Turnov.

We would always go there for two months, the two of us, our mother, the cook, and the nanny. Our father had work, so he wasn't there regularly, he would come when he had the time, and then would again leave for Prague. Besides us there were also other families there, some three, four would always be there. They were Jews.

Some of them were our relatives; some were more distant relatives with whom my mother was in closer contact than with her own. They were women that played bridge with her, and who had children, so we spent our summer vacation with them, we knew them from childhood. We spent beautiful, calm, secure times together.

I think that about three times a year, for Christmas, during spring break and at Easter, we used to go to the mountains. Our father would say: 'you're pale, you're city children, at least once in a while you have to have mountain air, you have to go skiing.' So we would go to the mountains. To Spindleruv Mlyn, and to Harrachov, always to the same hotel, to this day it still stands there.

Well, as a skier I was no great shakes, but it was fun. We skied downhill, uphill you had to walk, back then there were no ski lifts yet, and those hills were more these pastures, not ski runs, those I didn't have the courage for. You went, stopped against some fence, and walked uphill again. Other than this we hardly did any traveling around the country, nor to other countries. At school we used to go on these day-trips...

You know, we were raised as Czechoslovak patriots. It was a time of that fresh republican patriotism, the Republic was new and we were immeasurably proud that we had our president, Masaryk 11, that he was a person respected and liked world-wide and we used to sing a song about him:

Old father of ours,
you've got gray hairs,
while we've got your head,
we know we'll be well led.

It's some traditional folk song, but we of course referred to the President with it. Our principal was a former Legionnaire. He would always lead us down to the gym and there he would project slides for us, photos from the Legion, the life of the Legionnaires in wagons, in Siberia, and bear cubs that they used to bring for the President.

Every 28th October we would celebrate, at school there would be a big celebration, then we would go to the Emauzy Church, where there used to be, and now again has been renewed, Maratek's memorial to fallen Prague Legionnaires. [Editor's note: on 28th October 1918 Czechoslovakia gained independence from Austria-Hungary.]

I don’t know if there was some sort of speech, but in any case the entire school would gather there and celebrate the holiday. 7th March was also a big holiday: the birthday of President Masaryk. All of Prague was decorated, flags were hung out, every store had a picture of the president, everything was absolutely natural and absolutely spontaneous, everyone admired Masaryk and everyone was glad that that’s the way it was.

Nothing was decreed. Of course, it was mainly Czechs who were enthusiastic about the Republic; for other nationalities it wasn’t all that great, but we, the Czechs, were proud of the fact that we had a republic and that we had our president.

In 1937 President Masaryk died. I saw his funeral, our father got us a place in the windows of the Dunaj Palace, that’s on Narodni Trida [National Avenue], and from there we watched the procession that wound its way through Prague’s streets, I don’t remember details, but I do remember the overall feeling.

So that was the time of the First Republic. We thought that it was an absolutely secure, reliable existence, of course in the 1930s there were already reports getting through, of war in Abyssinia, war in Spain. It reached us children, we already read the papers and were interested in these events, so we did feel that there existed some sort of danger, but otherwise our childhood wasn’t affected by it.

We kept on playing soccer, kept on playing cops and robbers, just with the awareness that there were some clouds gathering on the horizon. For me it was even worse, in that the clouds were also gathering above our family, by coincidence our father died on 28th October 1938, and on 30th October the Munich Pact was signed. So for me the state and family catastrophes were really one and the same. Thus ended my carefree childhood.

We started to notice that the situation was thickening. In the middle of October 1938, Jiri Pick and I, Toman Brod, two Jewish boys, took up a collection for the defense of the state at school, not in Pstrossova Street, which had been closed, but in Stepanska Street, and collected over 200 crowns, which in those days was a huge sum.

We gave it to our teacher and our teacher was very moved by our initiative, which was of course useless, but it was a show of patriotism, we really felt that we lived with this republic, and that its end would be a catastrophe.

- **During the war**

In the fall of 1938 our father was in the hospital for about a month. Already before that he had been ill; he used to visit the spas for treatment. His condition got worse though, and he had to be operated on, I guess it was because of his prostate or something like that. However he didn’t cooperate with the doctors very much, and I think that this is why he died.

He was afraid of life, afraid of Hitler. He was buried in the Jewish cemetery on 28th October. Neither my brother nor I took part in the funeral, at that time we were outside of Prague, in Zleby. Shortly after our father his brother Alois also died, it was also in the fall of 1938.

After his death we had to move out of the apartment on the riverfront, not because we were thrown out, but simply because there wasn't the money to keep such a large apartment. We moved into an apartment that was on Veletrzni Street. It became available because its former owners, German Jews, had committed suicide after [the] Munich [Pact], they jumped out of a window.

Our cook came with us, but we no longer had the nanny. I started attending school in Holesovice, it was a Czech school. Once again we would go to Letna to play. Back then Letna was still this Wild West, it wasn't that beautiful plain it is today, neither the park nor Stalin's monument were there yet, just wilderness, where we played Cowboys and Indians and soccer.

Before the war I practically never met up with anti-Semitism. During my whole time at school I never heard the word Jew, or some anti-Semitic comment. We were Czech boys and we played soccer together, fought together, and I don't know what else.

We went on outings together, and if someone was a Jew, that wasn't important then. Of course, others have different experiences, but up until the war, I really didn't meet up with any anti-Semitism. Actually, once I did, but it was a trifle: in our building, still on Palacky Nabrezi, lived this Member of Parliament, a National Democrat, named Branzovsky, a lawyer, who tended towards the extreme right.

Once he wrote 'Jews out' or something like that on our door. I didn't understand it, I figured that some kid had scrawled some stupidity, but my father was very agitated by it. Of course no one knows if it was really he that wrote it, but they suspected him. After that Branzovsky was involved in the National Unity party.

[Editor's note: The political party National Unity (NS) was founded in 1934 with the credo 'Foreigners unwanted, our own protected'.]

Back then, at the end of the 1930s, that was probably the first display of anti-Semitism, which though wasn't directed at me, but at my father, our whole family. During the war, that was a different situation, even after Munich it was different, we could already see that something was up, that the annexation of the Sudetenland 12 was no joke, even though as children we understood it only superficially. But I can only talk about anti-Semitism in official displays, among children there was absolutely nothing like that.

The apartment on Veletrzni Street was still under our name, but we weren't there long, Uncle Jindrich Petrovsky convinced us to move into 'his' building on today's Obranci Miru Street. But a few months later the Germans threw us out of there. The thing was, that at that time the Germans were going around and looking at Jewish apartments, and an apartment that they liked, they confiscated.

So I remember that one day some German lady in a fur coat came to our place, started to look it over, and was saying, 'ja, schön, schön, schön', that meant that she liked it, and so we had to abandon it and move to the Old Town, where Jews from Prague that had had to leave their apartments were concentrated.

We lived in an apartment together with two other families. But because our cook was a Christian, she rented a two-room apartment under her name on Masna Street, and we actually lived there with her. We would only go to Kozi Street in the Old Town to sleep.

The whole building on Masna Street knew that there was a Jewish family there, but no one ratted on us. Likely it was a peculiarity, maybe not really a peculiarity, but for sure it wasn't common, but that's the way it was.

Because the anti-Jewish measures were increasing, and we, the children, could for example no longer go play at a normal playground, our playground became the old Jewish cemetery. It was open, there were benches, old people would sit there and children would run about among the tombstones. We played various games, made first contacts with the opposite sex; at that time we were 13.

I had actually already begun to be interested in girls earlier, but it was this pure and innocent thing, it was a certain co-education, a certain new experience. So-called first loves were born, which didn't last long, a few months at most, up until the spring of 1942.

While we still could, we tried to go out on trips somewhere. In the summer of 1940 we found out that somewhere in Jablonna nad Orlici some man was accepting Jewish children and youths, but also Christian children and youths, for stays at a summer house. He was the owner of this one old factory, which he provided for this purpose.

Of course, it was a secret, because at that time Jews were already not allowed to go to any communal camps, but he risked it and thanks to him we spent two nice months in the company of other young people. We went on walks, played some games, I think that we still didn't know much about the war.

The war was far off, there was no bombing, and though food was rationed via coupons, we didn't go hungry. In the beginning I was homesick, it was the first time that I had been away from my mother for that long, but in two or three days I got used to it and then I liked it there very much. Well, that was Jablonna, my last summer holidays.

Anti-Jewish measures became worse and worse. At first we weren't allowed to go to restaurants, to the theater, to the cinema, shopping hours were limited, we weren't allowed to own radios, telephones, jewelry was confiscated, we weren't allowed out after 8pm, we weren't allowed to go to the town square, to the park, to the Vltava river, we weren't allowed to buy various goods…Of course this I already felt…

In the summer of 1940 they threw me out of school [see Exclusion of Jews from schools in the Protectorate] 13, after that I was only allowed to associate with Jewish boys and girls. This sort of ghetto was created, which didn't allow us out, not many people wanted or were even allowed to associate with us. When some Christians came over for a visit, it was a secret. They didn't want to take the risk and we didn't want to endanger them.

When we could no longer attend public schools with non-Jewish children, home study started to be organized, that is, as far as Jews still had some sort of home. Jewish teachers privately taught us certain subjects. There were about eight, ten children in our group, boys and girls together. I don't

recall that we knew each other from before; we simply got to know each other and were friends.

For about a half, three quarters of a year we attended these groups, then in 1942 transports began leaving and so a Jewish school on Jachymova Street became free, that's where today the Terezin Initiative 14 has its offices. I then attended this school for about two months in the spring of 1942. We were normally taught that what we were supposed to be learning at that age. It wasn't until here that I started attending Jewish religion classes.

While it was still possible, we rode bikes, we had this group of about ten young Jewish people, and would go for example on trips to Roztoky or to Zbraslav, to Stechovice. The youth tried to make use of their free time somehow, and to spend it together. But this was only while stars [see Yellow star – Jewish star in Protectorate] 15 weren't worn, after that it was bad.

When we had to start wearing a star, it was a real shock for me. Because everything, all those other measures didn't really affect me that much. I went to the cinema anyways. Though there was a sign saying 'Juden nicht zuganglich' [Jews not allowed], it didn't bother me, no one noticed me, so I kept on going. I didn't go to the theater, that's true.

After eight in the evening, for example when it was summer and it was nice out, I didn't pay much attention to it, I still went out with the guys. But when the star started to be worn, that was when I first realized that I'm something that doesn't belong in society, and that made me weep. Though it was basically foolishness, despite this, this measure affected me most of all.

At that time my mother took me to the dentist, I needed to have my teeth fixed, and told him about how I had reacted to this event; that was in September of 1941. He was this young doctor, and he said to me: 'boy, you know, I think that we're going to have much worse and more serious reasons for weeping, than this one.'

So I tried to cover my star up somehow, put a school bag over it or something, it was really horrible for me to walk around with it. Of course that this covering up was punishable, there were rats that watched out for it. Many anti-Semitic magazines were being put out, published by Czechs, one of them was called Aryan Struggle. In it was written, for example, that the Jew Winternitz was hiding his star, or that the Jewess Rudi Roubickova had been seen out after 8pm, talking to a white Jew, white Jew was a designation for Semitophiles, Christians that associated with Jews. Aryan Struggle was this denunciatory rag that was very dangerous, could bring a person denouncement, punishment, jail, even a concentration camp. Even Jews used to buy it a lot, of course while they still didn't have to wear a star, even I bought it, it amused us in a masochistic sort of way. We kids would then draw Jewish caricatures according to it, Roosevelt, Roosevelt was Rosenfeld and that was a Jew, and Churchill was also a Jew, and Stalin was also a Jew, everyone was a Jew. Masaryk was of course a Jew. Really, we made fun of it more than anything else.

But the situation kept getting worse. It was no longer permitted to go outside of Prague; a Jew wasn't allowed to leave his area of residence. It was forbidden to ride the train, ride in the streetcar or maybe just in the last wagons, later not at all.

The limitations kept getting worse and worse, but it was still life, when a person could lie down in his own bed, perhaps eat in a decent environment, and still have decent food. In Terezin it was something else again, though even that Terezin wasn't the worst. Horror has its dimensions.

When I give a talk somewhere, I say that when someone lived in London or New York during the war, and imagined that he was in occupied Prague, he was horrified how it could be possible to live under such a Hitlerite dictatorship. And when someone lived in Prague, he was happy, that he could live in Prague and did all sorts of things so he wouldn't have to go to Terezin.

And Terezin, that was another stage, another dimension of horror. And understandably Terezin, when we got to Auschwitz, we saw that it hadn't been any horror, that there in that extermination camp was the real horror, and then on and on. Horror is a relative concept, it can descend into great depths, to great lows, before reaching its bottom, and then it can no longer be graded.

Some of our friends emigrated while there was till time, but no one in our family left the country. All of the Petrovsky brothers stayed here, because they had property here, they couldn't take their buildings and factories and their farms on their backs. They said to themselves: 'We'll survive it.

After all, we're not going to abandon our real estate that we have here, our sawmill, while it doesn't belong to us any more, we still have to watch over it somehow.' Karel, who had the Christian wife, collaborated with the Germans in some fashion, or perhaps she collaborated, so they were protected in some way, and thus stayed here. The others stayed as well, right up until the bitter end, when there was no longer any escaping.

That's this Jewish characteristic, no one imagined that the worst would happen. We'll live through it somehow. We can't go to coffee shops, so we'll play cards at home. We're not allowed to attend the theater, that we'll survive. After 8pm we're not allowed to go out, so we won't go anywhere. It still wasn't dangerous.

What the Germans were doing, it was this tactic of whittling down. They didn't say it all at once, so people got used to it. It was this mentality, though we're oppressed, second-rate, it's still livable. If they don't allow us to shop in stores, we've still got some money, so we'll buy on the black market. You could still get food.

There were Christians that helped us, of course: our cook, she also had her connections, and then there were friends from when we were still in that house on the riverside… This one Christian woman used to come over, Miss Janska. We always looked forward to her coming over, not only because of the news she would bring us, but also because to celebrate her visit.

Mrs. Kopska would always prepare open-faced sandwiches and excellent potato salad. So it was always this pleasant get-together.

Miss Janska listened to the radio, had connections with the underground, brought us secret magazines, especially Boj. Each time we threw ourselves at her and wanted to know what London was saying, we were waiting and waiting that the war would be over. In 1940 we were waiting, thinking that it couldn't last long.

We very much believed that 'dependable news one lady was saying,' in Terezin it was called Latrinengeschichte [empty rumor]. And so it was until the end of the war: we were constantly waiting, thinking that it can't last long.

Like the writer Milan Kundera says in his novel The Joke: ‘optimism is the opiate of the masses.’ But it worked precisely like that. Imagine that they would have told the Jews, that it’s going to last six years and that they’ll go somewhere to the East to extermination camps. Many would have committed suicide. Even so there were a lot of suicides during those times.

In May 1942 Heydrich was assassinated [see Heydrichiade] 16. Martial law 17 was proclaimed, but we still didn’t take it seriously. That day our mother left to go sleep in Kozi Street, but it was crowded, infested, dirty, that many people couldn’t maintain any hygiene, and so we two boys stayed that night as well, after martial law was proclaimed, in the apartment on Masna Street. The Hitlerites however were conducting inspections of all buildings, to see if there wasn’t someone unregistered there; they were combing through Prague, looking for the assassins.

Can you imagine what would have happened had they come there? We would have all been dead; they would have shot all of us as illegal and unauthorized inhabitants. Our mother wasn’t with us at that time, and of course found out from friends what was happening during the night, that SS and police patrols were going about, so she couldn’t sleep.

She couldn’t even go out at night, since there was martial law. So it wasn’t until 6am that she arrived, all terrified, to see if we were all right. We didn’t know about a thing, and luckily were all right, the German controls hadn’t come here. These are coincidences… the coincidence was that we were saved. And coincidences played a big role in my life later on.

The first of our relatives to be deported were my uncles Jindrich and Jiri Petrovsky with their families: already in 1941 they went with all their children to Lodz [ghetto] 18. My family, my mother, brother and I, went to Terezin on 27th July 1942. We packed our bags and along with them we were gathered at the so-called New Exhibition Grounds, where otherwise they exhibited tractors or something like that during trade shows.

Now people were gathered here before transport. We stayed there for about three days, it was pretty sad, we slept on only some mats. Then, in the morning, they led us off to the railway station in Bubny, from where we left, still in normal passenger rail cars, watched over by policemen, not for Terezin but for Bohusovice, because at that time there wasn’t yet a rail spur to the ghetto.

Our transport was named Aau and contained about a thousand people, under eight percent survived [to the end of the war]. From Bohusovice we had to walk about three kilometers, carrying our luggage, which though they soon confiscated and we never saw it again. I found myself in Terezin.

All ties were formed anew here. People lived in various barracks, in different buildings, different lodgings, it was necessary to make new contacts. Uncle Jindrich Brod from Pardubice, who arrived there around the same time we did, worked as a cook there. In fact, when he could, he always gave us something extra with our food.

My mother lived in the Hamburg barracks, I lived in school L417, and my brother lived in a different boys’ home. Even though she had never held a job in her life, my mother adapted quite well to the conditions there. She was a very courageous woman, who didn’t fall into any sort of despair, on the contrary, she provided us with some sort of security. In Terezin she worked as a nurse for mentally and physically handicapped children, and behaved well. We went to visit her almost every

afternoon.

In the afternoon we would have lessons. And what was taught? Mostly they talked about food; it's interesting that in concentration camps they always talked about food. There they'd cook in their imaginations, exchange recipes, talk about what's the first thing we'll make for dinner when they liberate us. Of course we studied mathematics, we studied history, religion, naturally.

At noon we had time off, and we would go visit our mother. In the afternoon there might have been some smaller chores: we took care of the garden, or played soccer, read and so on. We also sometimes went to see some performance, to see Brundibar or something else. Under the guidance of our tutors we also rehearsed a varied repertoire of our own, the girls joined us and together we put together some recitals, theater, concerts, played various games...

[Editor's note: The children's opera Brundibar was created in 1938 for a contest announced by the then Czechoslovak Ministry of Schools and National Education. It was composed by Hans Krasa based on a libretto by Adolf Hoffmeister. The first performance of Brundibar – by residents of the Jewish orphanage in Prague – wasn't seen by the composer. He had been deported to Terezin. Not long after him, Rudolf Freudenfeld, the son of the orphanage's director, who had rehearsed the opera with the children, was also transported. This opera had more than 50 official performances in Terezin. The idea of solidarity, collective battle against the enemy and the victory of good over evil today speaks to people the whole world over. Today the opera is performed on hundreds of stages in various corners of the world.]

For children life in Terezin wasn't such a catastrophe. Of course, we knew that we were hemmed in by walls, that there was a certain restriction, but we didn't perceive it as an immediate horror. Maybe the smaller children did, well, everyone experienced it differently, everyone has different experiences.

As I am saying, for me Terezin wasn't so horrible. It may also have been due to the fact that we were 13, 14 years old and we were starting to live like young people, we were beginning to experience loves, we were forming impressions of what it was going to be like when we would once again be able to live like normal people; it was the springtime of our lives.

While we weren't yet utterly destroyed, like in Auschwitz or other camps, while we were healthy and strong, fed after a fashion, really after a fashion, we also thought about pleasant things.

The head teacher in our boys' home was named Ota Klein. He was this young guy, who was something over 20 years old. Actually, all the teachers were young people between the ages of 18 to 25. And understandably each one of them had his own idea of how to lead his section of the home.

For example, in No. 1, Eisinger, who was older, a Communist, led his class in a leftist way. They published a magazine called Vedem 19, which was leftist. On the other hand, Franta Mayer in No. 7 was a Zionist, and so the children were led towards Zionism.

Our teacher, Arno Ehrlich, was a Czech Jew, who led us in this pseudo-scouting spirit: we had various principles, we 'hunted beavers' [similar to collecting scout badges in various disciplines – Translator's note] by Foglar's example, we learned the Morse code and so on. I think our magazine

was called Beaver, but unfortunately hasn't been preserved. I don't know why. In the end a number of boys remained in Terezin and could have saved it, in any case it didn't happen. I remember that I drew some covers for it. Each issue had some sort of slogan.

One slogan for example was 'help your fellow man' – a scout helps his fellow man. And so as a symbol I drew two people shaking hands. The cover was symbolic; it was supposed to represent the concept of the entire issue. Thanks to his naturalness and his way of behaving, Arno Ehrlich was much respected and liked among the boys. He also went to Auschwitz, but he survived. Now he's named Arno Erban and lives in America.

Friday evening was Erev Shabbat. Each home had to line up, and Otta Klein walked about and checked whether everything was clean, if boots were clean, if there weren't bits of food in your canteen… Points were given for all this, and if someone had a mess, everyone lost points.

The boy in question then became the subject of derision, because he had ruined the entire home's evaluation. You see, the homes competed among themselves as to who would have the best marks that month. You know, the teachers were always trying to in some fashion isolate us from that everyday ghetto life, from the everyday horrors of that prison. They tried, within the realm of possibility, to give us some sort of normal living conditions.

We competed in soccer; each home had its own soccer team. We played on some sort of field that had been built on the fortress walls. [Editor's note: The town of Terezin is basically an old fortress, which was surrounded by walls – in places very wide ones.

As the town gradually developed, soil was piled up around some of the walls and so in places it reached the height of the walls – that's why it was possible for a soccer field to be located 'on the walls.'] Of course, the grown-ups also played soccer in the barracks courtyard. That was always a big event.

Several hundred, perhaps a thousand people would gather around and cheer for the individual teams. Other things also helped us free ourselves from the reality of prison. A performance of 'The Bartered Bride' was a huge experience, though it was a concert performance, without costumes, but with amazing singers:

German singers learned their parts in Czech, and sang it with such amazing style that it was said that that performance would have held up even on the stage of the National Theater. It was performed in the school gymnasium, and the effect of them singing 'a good thing has happened, true love is victorious…' – everyone was so moved they wept. It was a huge spiritual support.

We got packages that were sent to us by our former cook, Mrs. Kopska, and this on the other hand was a huge material support. It wasn't a simple thing, the post office was accepting less and less packages, and if for example some anti-Semitic clerk was sitting behind the counter, he would peer suspiciously at them, in the sense of 'what are you, Christians, doing sending packages to Jews?' Another thing was finding the food, which wasn't at all a simple matter, because food was rationed via coupons.

It was expensive. Where Anci got the money, I don't know, perhaps her mother left her some cash. She even managed to send us packages to Auschwitz, when about twice there was the opportunity

to do so. They were addressed to the Arbeitslager [labor camp] near Neuberun – no one knew where that was.

So we got one or two packages from her even in Auschwitz. Then it stopped. The packages weighed about five kilos, three to five kilos. Of course bread was sent, some flour, cream of wheat…simply basic foodstuffs. Maybe some salami, it was a big help. There wasn't such a horrible hunger in Terezin, like there was later in Auschwitz, at least not for us, for the children, because we for example got packages that came for the other prisoners but were undeliverable, because they had either died or left for the East. The Jewish self-government then gave these packages mainly to the children.

Entirely different was the situation of old people, who died horrible deaths in Terezin. Over 30,000 people died here, mainly old people, and mainly from Germany. Young German Jews were sent from their homes to the East right away, old people were sent to 'spas.'

They were told that they could purchase a stay at the spa in Terezin, if they pay for it, give the Hitlerites their home, sell all their belongings, and in exchange for that they can move to the Terezin spa, where they will have accommodations with a view out on a lake, on a park.

They then arrived in Terezin and saw in what conditions they would have to live here. In buildings packed from cellar to attic, in absolutely desperate hygienic conditions. If there were toilets at all, they were dry, water always only ran for a little while, there were bugs, dirt, disease…And so those that arrived from some sort of civilized environment to these horrible conditions, quite often died. They had it the worst here.

We children would of course see them from time to time. Not that we would go visit them in their homes, that was something so repellent, that we were disgusted, and it was also dangerous, there were bedbugs, fleas, it was simply horrible, horrible conditions.

These people got no rations, there was no one left in Germany to send them packages, and so they would stand at the food distribution points and beg for soup. We children didn't eat soup, because it wasn't soup, it was some sort of warm water left over from boiling potatoes or something, so we would give it to them, we weren't as hungry as all that. I also remember them picking out rotten potatoes…they simply lived in desperation, but that was the paradox of Terezin.

The paradox of Terezin was that on the one hand people were dying of hunger, desperation, dirt, disease, hopelessness, but on the other hand people played soccer, there were concerts, operas such as Brundibar, The Bartered Bride and so on.

In Terezin people sang, people died. And you have to put that together. For example, lectures. There were dozens and dozens of lectures. You know, the SS didn't mind, the SS mainly said to themselves: the main thing is that you're not preparing some sort of rebellion, that you're keeping order that we've ordered you to keep. The Jewish self-government is to keep an eye on that, and as long as there isn't some sort of disorder, you can do what you want. Maybe not.

More likely it was tolerated, rather than someone permitting it. But there were amazing lectures. Historical lectures, philosophical lectures, law lectures, musical theory, Jewish history… I'm saying that Terezin was in this respect the freest town in the entire Protectorate or Reich. Because there

could be no thought of what was put on here, be it lectures, allegorical sketches or theater performances, that something like that could be held in the Protectorate.

So in this spiritual respect it was the freest place. Another paradox. Don't forget, that Jews that met here were really the elite of all of Europe, whether they were German, Austrian or Czech Jews, whether they were painters, writers, musicians, doctors, scientists…it was simply an intellectual elite, that when it had the means, made itself known here. And again, it's necessary to put this into the proper perspective. Of course, Terezin was for one a place where people died, that was one of its purposes, but it was also a place where one waited for further transport.

For young people life in Terezin wasn't the worst thing. During their time there they managed to adapt to the local conditions, they managed to make some connections in the kitchen or with the guards, they went to work in gardens outside of the ghetto, so they would bring back some vegetables, they got packages…

The longer a prisoner lives in certain conditions, and this doesn't have to do with just Terezin, this is in every jail, the better he is able to make connections, orient himself, find where you can get what advantages, which guard is more sympathetic, which one you can talk to, who will help or how you can smuggle something in. People managed it, and those who managed to stay in Terezin until the fall of 1944, when the transports to the East were stopped, saved their lives.

While people that didn't escape the transports, 99 percent of them died. In Auschwitz, in Treblinka, in Majdanek, in Minsk, or wherever they were sent. The biggest fear of young people in Terezin was the wait for the next transports to the East. In Terezin everyone tried to avoid the transports, and it really was the biggest luck of their life when someone managed it. How many people survived from those Eastern transports? And especially children didn't survive. As long as children stayed in Terezin, they had a chance of survival. But children that were sent to the East, had practically no chance at all.

We left Terezin on the December transport in 1943, for Auschwitz. We got the summons on these strips of paper, and so we proceeded in the morning with the remnants of our luggage, the cattle wagons arrived, they threw some of our luggage into them, stuffed about 60 or 70 of us people into one wagon, plus they stuck in a pail of tea and another big pail as a toilet, and sealed the wagon.

I was saying to myself, this can't be happening, how can we breathe in here, how are we supposed to survive the trip? It was one of the worst experiences ever. The shock, when from the, despite everything, civilized environment of Terezin, they all of a sudden transported us like cattle…

The tea was soon spilled or drunk, and the toilet overflowing, because one pail was simply too little for sixty people. Filth, stench, of course there were already several corpses, you couldn't breathe, horrible thirst… Two days we rode on, two nights and a day or something like that, it was an utterly unimaginable experience. The thirst was terrible.

After those two days and two nights we were close to insanity from thirst, and what of those who were transported here from Greece or Crete for seven or twelve days without water, by then most of them were of course dead, and the rest would have given everything for a bit of tea.

We were that December transport that went to the family camp and wasn't immediately liquidated. A second, similar one, went in May of 1944, and also wasn't immediately liquidated. While the first transport, which left in September, and also went to the family camp, was completely destroyed on 8th March 1944. Before their deaths the prisoners had to write postcards post-dated to 25th March 1944. Based on these, those in Terezin didn't believe that they were all dead. I think that they didn't want to believe it, that it was an attempt to rather not talk about it, to rather not spread panic.

By me it was a huge moral failure: in the summer of 1944 there were reports from other sources coming to Terezin, so there they already knew that there were gas chambers in Auschwitz. And they, the leaders of the self-government, they let those people in Terezin, in fact they talked them into it, board the transports.

Why didn't they say no, we aren't going to organize the transports any more? Let the Germans do it themselves now. We're not going to have anything to do with it. The Jewish council of elders didn't dare to do this. What was the organization of those deportation transports like? The Germans might have said about someone, this one's going on the transport, because he was smoking or stole something, but the others were to be selected.

Can you imagine what then ensued? When someone was selected for the transport, he tried to do a so-called 'self-reclamation.' That means that he went to see the representatives on the council of elders and said: 'I'm indispensable, I don't want to go, take me off the list.' But, his place had to be taken by someone else. Do you understand this Hamletesque dilemma? It was a battle for life. One was saved, but another was sent to his death.

In 1943 they could still say that they didn't know what was happening there, that they thought that they were work transports, and so they organized them. They didn't know anything yet about Auschwitz, about Treblinka, they did think that there wasn't anything good there, but neither did they know about anything concretely terrible. There was no certainty, only a suspicion.

But during the time that the Jewish council already knew what was going on there, and despite that still organized the transports, that I look upon as a failure. They should at least have said, 'no more. You can't count on us any more. We aren't going to organize it any more.' And it was a matter of only days.

On 28th October 1944 the last transport left, and in a few days it was over: the Hitlerites blew up the gas chambers. Whoever didn't get onto that transport saved his own life.

I don't have a right to judge, of course, because I know that those conditions… but you know, when someone takes on some sort of function, it's not only a privilege. When he accepts some function, he then has to realize that the moment some sort of crisis develops, some sort of horrible dilemma, he must then be prepared to put his life on the line. And this doesn't have to do with just this case.

Well, so what would have happened? Maybe something would have happened, I don't know, maybe they would have put another, different system into place, but it would at least have been an act of some sort of resistance.

They unloaded us at Auschwitz, at that time there wasn't yet a spur line to Birkenau. It was horribly cold there, it was a freezing December day, around us the barking of dogs and the SS and prisoners in that striped clothing. Before that we hadn't seen prisoners in striped clothing, in Terezin we wore normal civilian clothes, there were no prison uniforms there.

We even had normal hair, we only wore the star. Everyone in Terezin was decently dressed. Now we saw those striped figures. They loaded us onto trucks and drove us, from Auschwitz it's about three kilometers. While still in Terezin, the old prisoners said to us: when you see electrified barbed wire, and beside them warning signs, that there is high voltage, you're in a concentration camp. And this is exactly what we saw from the truck.

So I said to myself, concentration camp, that was a concept. Of course no one knew exactly what it meant, but those rumors and stories, what was going on here, just that inspired horror. We didn't know about extermination camps, but just the concentration camp was enough for us.

Now I said, 'so now I'm suddenly out of that relatively civilized environment of Terezin in a concentration camp.' They threw us on some pallets, luckily they didn't make a selection, led us off to the showers, where they stripped us, shaved us, tattooed numbers on us and gave us some prison rags, they were already disinfected and were horrible, plus wooden shoes and we looked like scarecrows.

Eventually we managed to exchange these rags for some better ones. The first impression was so terrible, and the horror of those buildings, they probably used to be stables, maybe for horses, and now they had six or seven hundred people stuffed into them.

On top of that of course the brutality of the functionaries, the SS... Basically the entire shock of arriving in Auschwitz was horrible. You know, those are the various degrees of horror. Now we had once again sunk to a lower level, to a higher category of horror.

Luckily I got into the children's block, which was led by Fredy Hirsch 20, and this was a certain relief. During the day we could stay in the children's block, and so in some fashion separate ourselves from that horrible life outside, we didn't have to continually be looking at the SS and at that whole horror of the rest of the camp. It was an amazing privilege that Fredy Hirsch managed to obtain.

He was an extraordinarily charismatic person, who impressed even the Germans. He had this military bearing, so they in some fashion respected him, and thanks to this the children's block was created. In it were children up to the ages of 14 or 15, I think that I shaved off a year or so, to be able to get into it. In it we had a teacher who tried to occupy us somehow: the small children played or sang, the older ones had some sort of studies; it helped us to for at least a while forget the excruciating hunger.

Interesting people used to come see us, for example, once a former journalist who had participated in the Olympics in Berlin in 1936 came by, and he spoke to us about what the atmosphere there had been like, how Hitler had the feeling that the Aryan race must be victorious, but when Jesse Owens defeated a German and got four gold medals, Hitler could have had a fit. And we were overjoyed that that Negro had beat Hitler, and so we were filled with hope that one day we would also beat Hitler. Not all were successful, but at least some were.

When there were roll calls at the camp, this meant that once or twice a day the prisoners had to line up in groups of five and the SS would walk around and count them; they took place outside, no matter what the weather. We children again had the advantage that we could do the counting in our block, in relative warmth.

Not that it was hot or anything in there, but it wasn't freezing either, because there was actually some sort of heating. For example, Fredy Hirsch arranged for the small children to get better food, like perhaps getting thicker soup. But what the sense of that was, why they fed those children for six months and then sent them all into the gas, that I don't know.

Hitler's chief doctor Dr. Josef Mengele used to walk about there. He was this man who was always in a perfect uniform, always wore white gloves, he looked very distinguished and acted very kindly towards the children, like an uncle. Simply no one would have believed that he's a murderer. This was of course all a big fraud, a sham.

The prisoners in the family camp had a note in the central registry, 'Sonderbehandlung nach sechs Monaten.' Special handling after six months. This was a code; special handling meant death in the gas chambers after six months. We had it too.

The fateful June 1944 arrived. But the situation had changed, there was an invasion, the front was approaching. Germany needed workers, so the Hitlerites apparently realized that it would be a waste of human resources if they liquidated healthy people. And so they picked several thousand healthy men and women and sent them to work camps. Some of these people survived.

They picked my brother as well. He however didn't survive, he apparently died in the spring of 1945, either due to illness or during the death marches. My mother had already undergone an operation for cancer in Terezin – they removed one of her breasts – and now couldn't pass the selection, so they left her there. I also stayed, because I was a boy of fourteen, unfit for labor.

One hot summer day, some boys say that it was on Thursday, 6th July 1944, I don't remember the date, it's possible, Mengele came to the camp and one boy found the courage to come near him and said to him that we were one more group of boys, who were capable of working:

'They aren't yet emaciated and sick, it's true they're not sixteen yet, but are willing to work.' Mr. Mengele was apparently in a good mood, and was so kind that he didn't have the boy shot on the spot, and he actually organized a selection in the children's block, which was already empty.

I remember that he was standing on the right, and we, naked with clothes and shoes in our hands, marched past him. He then indicated whether we could survive, or couldn't. He pointed about ninety boys in the right direction. The registrar then recorded their numbers. I had the luck to be among them. He sent us to the neighboring camp.

That was our salvation. Not the salvation of all, but of those ninety boys almost half survived. It was this miracle, pure chance. On 10th July there was another mass murder, which was perhaps even bigger than the one in March, about seven thousand people from the Terezin family camp were murdered over two nights. Women with children, old, sick people, they simply all died in the gas chambers. It was the end of the family camp. It was also the death of my mother.

Then we arrived at the men's camp. Because there wasn't room anywhere else, we were assigned to a block that was designated for the penal commando, for prisoners that were guilty of something and so were put into an especially tough work group.

We however were not subject to the duties of the 'Strafkommando.' Our block was closed, it had its own courtyard that was enclosed by a wall, and on the other side of that courtyard was the 'Sonderkommando,' prisoners that worked in the crematoriums and in the gas chambers.

From these people we learned what had happened to the family camp. Of course we suspected it; it was they that finally confirmed it. They told us how exactly it had taken place; one prisoner showed us a box full of gold teeth. He probably smuggled them in, and then tried to exchange them for food or cigarettes or something like that.

Every little while sirens would go off, that meant that some prisoner had escaped. Lots of people tried to escape. As soon as it was found out, the barbed wire was electrified: you see, the wire wasn't always electrified, only in the event of some crisis, like when the transports were going to the gas chambers. But now a state of emergency was declared, the wires were charged with high voltage, and most of those that tried to escape were caught.

They were led back in a horrible fashion, accompanied by taunting music, some sort of march, then they gave them a sign to hold, how happy they are to be back again, they led them to our block's courtyard, beat them horribly, and a few days later, when they had barely regained their health and hadn't died straight away from the beating, they hung them. The gallows stood in the middle of the camp and the entire camp had to come watch the execution. And of course we were also witnesses to people being tortured in the courtyard of our block.

After some time we again got our bearings. For the first time we got the chance to go outside of the area of the highly guarded camp. We had this hay-wagon, about eight of us boys pulled it, and we would for example go for wood for the crematoriums. It was stacked up in the courtyard there, and the functionaries told us to bring it, that it was needed for heating, cooking...

On the way we passed a spur line around which were piled things that had remained from some transport. For example when Hungarian Jews arrived, there were lots of things lying there, because they hadn't had a chance to clean it up yet. We found for example loaves of bread, salamis, shirts, shoes, jam... those were all amazing possessions.

So we loaded it up under the wood and smuggled it into the camp, in this way we helped ourselves out and improved our lives. As well, when someone would, say, work in the kitchen, peeling potatoes, he could tie up a pant leg, dump some potatoes in it, smuggle them out and help himself out in this way; it was a good opportunity. In time we were able to orient ourselves in the camp, we saw where it was possible to come by some things, so a trip out of the camp was always useful.

Here I spent three months, but once at the beginning of October I was in the kitchen, peeling potatoes and suddenly someone called out that they were picking out boys for another transport to someplace else, outside of Auschwitz. I found out that it was my friends, so I ran out, made my way in among them, and again some SS soldier was pointing right, left. He pointed me in the opposite direction of most of my friends, but suddenly, on some impulse, I ran over behind his back without him seeing me, to the larger group.

So maybe it was better, maybe it wasn't better, but in any case I'm alive, so I guess I saved my life. They took our group of twenty or thirty boys to the Gross-Rosen camp 21 in Silesia, and there it was an utter catastrophe. Yet another dimension of horror. It was already fall, cold, we had only summer clothing.

There was no possibility of getting something more, to go get some packages, for some remnants of food, the only thing remaining was work. Slave work in the forest at a sawmill, in the freezing cold, in hunger, infested by thousands of lice.

In Auschwitz the lice had been at least somewhat under control. There was some sort of cleanliness, when a louse was found, you went for disinfection. You see, the Germans were very afraid of spotted fever, which was transmitted by lice. But here... it was something catastrophic.

You can't imagine, what it's like, to be constantly lice-ridden, lice multiply geometrically, you can't exterminate them, you kill one and in a little while there are ten in its place. You sleep under a blanket that moves. And when for example old people can't defend themselves... well, it was simply one big catastrophe.

The winter of 1944-45 was moreover very cold, we were in the mountains, either the Orlicke or Anderspass, it was somewhere close to Broumov, on the other side of the mountains. We chopped down trees, which was hard work, but worst of all was that horrible winter, that constant freezing cold and the constant hunger, the whole hopelessness of it. The food was meager, a person couldn't come by anything extra any more. There was nothing in the fields, we looked for frozen acorns, but you couldn't find anything, it was winter.

While we had looked down upon those German Jews in Terezin, now I also picked rotted potatoes, if I had the chance to get to them. We were really becoming 'muselmen.' People whose bones were covered only by skin. I then fell ill, I went to the headquarters; it was my certain salvation. The food was still nothing much, but it was more or less warm, I was in bed and didn't have to go out into that horrible freezing cold and do that horrible work. It was a certain liberation.

After a few days, at the end of January 1945, they took me to yet another camp, so I lost touch with the rest of the boys. Of those thirty boys, only two of us unfortunately survived. Of those that stayed in Auschwitz, about forty survived. They also got into different camps, but on the whole had better conditions.

Perhaps if I hadn't run over, I would have survived in a more comfortable fashion... who knows. Out of the ninety, forty survived, and from our twenty or thirty only two of us survived: I, and this one Dutch boy. I don't know of anyone else. That Dutch guy is already dead, he was named Durlacher. So from that group I'm the only one alive.

Then I got into this one factory, really more of a repository of the ill, who practically weren't going to do any work at all, and were just waiting for death. There were old people, the ill, you can't imagine what sort of hygienic conditions ruled the place, the lice and of course hunger.

Those few months before the end of the war, that was a battle for life. I was really calculating what would happen first, whether I'd die or the war would end. It was a matter of weeks, of days, of hours. I was in strategically unimportant Kladsko, which the armies aiming for Berlin and into the

Protectorate at first skirted, and only the second wave arrived there. The Germans ran away before them, the evening of 8th May it was empty, and on 9th May the Russians and Polish appeared. The end of the war.

With the last of my strength I crawled outside, I slept in some stable among horses, and in the morning I was crawling along a road, when some Russian saw me. I remember that he was this typical Ivan, he had a beard, and when he saw that I was picking through garbage, he took me by the hand and led me to a nearby German farm.

The entire family had to line up, he told them to give me some eggs, and ordered them to take care of me. That family stared at me like at someone from Mars. They had never seen the likes of it: I was deathly ill. They stripped me, put me in a tub. I told them to burn my clothes, that they were full of lice... and then they brought other Germans, their friends, to come have a look at me.

They probably didn't know at all that somewhere a half kilometer away there was a concentration camp, where people were dying. They put me in a clean room, and then they could think of nothing better than to make me some sort of strong soup, beef or chicken, which for me, emaciated as I was, was of course a catastrophe, subsequently I got diarrhea.

At that time I had spotted fever, tuberculosis and I don't know what else... and so, when they saw that they themselves couldn't help me in any way, that I'm not improving, they took me to some hospital, some Polish field hospital. I laid there for several weeks, I got over the spotted fever and then they released me.

I set out on the road to Prague, partly on foot, partly on some trucks or freight trains, until I got to the Czech border, to the border station Mezilesi-Lichkov. I sat at the train station and waited for a train to Prague. Then I got on it and said to myself, well, so what, I'm going to Prague.

- **Post-war**

I staggered around Prague, I hadn't forgotten where I lived, so I went there. I only hoped that the building wouldn't be destroyed, because I had heard that there had been fighting in Prague. Luckily the building was still standing, our neighbor, Mrs. Bondy, took me in to her apartment, because Mrs. Kopska wasn't at home.

Then Mrs. Kopska arrived as well, I went over there and was telling her my whole tale, and mainly I ate. That saved my life. The doctor told me that he hadn't hoped at all that I would survive, that's how serious my condition was, but I had such a strong will to live, that I overcame my physical condition.

I gained weight, I easily ate a whole marble cake in one sitting; food was my only joy. And then to be in a clean bed and have some sort of comfort. I spent the first few months in various hospitals and sanatoriums, for practically two years I was out of circulation. My condition was not that easy to overcome. That's what the post-war period was like for me.

As far as my family went, I was the only one to survive the war, my mother and brother both died. From my other relatives, my uncle Jindrich Brod and aunt Berta from Pardubice died in Auschwitz, Uncle Jiri Petrovsky with his wife Anna and son Ivos most likely died in Lodz, Uncle Jiri's daughter,

Vera, who he had from his first marriage with that Italian woman, she wasn't deported, and died after the war of leukemia.

Further, my mother's sister Stefa Pickova died in Auschwitz in 1944, her brother Jindrich was also in Auschwitz, but he didn't die until after its liberation in March of 1945. It's a miracle that his wife, Aunt Ruzena, and their two children also survived the war. My mother's brother Karel wasn't deported anywhere.

After the war I lived with Mrs. Kopska in the apartment on Masna Street, from which we had left for the transports. For a long time I couldn't go to school or work, it wasn't until the beginning of 1948 that I began working as some sort of clerk in a company that in those days was named 'Gramofonove zavody' [Gramophone Works], where I worked for about two years.

In the meantime I got an offer, that people that wanted to study and actively participate in society, can apply, and if they didn't have their high school diploma, that they had to finish it. For a few months after that I attended some sort of course, at its end I had an exam that substituted for a high school finals, and after that I could register at university.

In the 1950-51 semester I entered the School of Political and Economic Sciences, which was really more of a school that was supposed to educate functionaries for an economic and political life. In time it was closed, and its students were transferred to the Philosophico-historical Faculty of the Charles University, where they could choose various fields for further study, such as philosophy, history or some politico-diplomatic path.

I chose history and finished in 1955. After graduation each student got a placement certificate, some sort of document, the right to work either in an institute or in some company. I applied for a position in the Military Historical Institute, where I and about five other fellow students started working in 1955.

We were very poor. Right after the war there was a currency reform, when all money was transferred to so-called fixed deposits, thereby all savings accumulated during the Protectorate became invalid. My mother had left behind some jewelry, which Mrs. Kopska had saved, and for example for one gold chain I bought myself a suit in Darex. Darex was a predecessor to Tuzex [a special store with foreign goods that weren't normally available in Communist countries], where with gold you could buy things that otherwise weren't available in stores.

As I said, the fate of other Jews had missed my uncle Karel, who stayed in Prague. After the war he was really my only relative that could help me. They had a beautiful building in Vinohrady, and I used to go begging to him, like when I needed some money for school. While he did usually give me something, it was usually in a way so that his wife wouldn't see it. I was so humiliating! That's why I was basically glad when his family moved to Brazil after 1948. We didn't keep in touch after that; my uncle has since died.

The time following the year 1948, when the Communist regime took power, was a time of the harshest persecutions and of that whole strained atmosphere, when really anyone could be a potential enemy and everyone could be arrested.But I was apart from all that; I didn't participate in any political activity. I was a student that was interested in studies, so I didn't involve myself in practically any public functions or politics; it was outside my sphere of interest.

I didn’t have the kind of preparation for studies that other boys had, who went through all seven grades of high school; for me studies were tough to handle. So my main worry was managing my studies: to pass exams and continue on to the next years of school. So that’s why I have to admit that political events were outside of my focus of attention, outside of my main focus.

Even before February [1948] I joined the Communist Party, because I had this idea, that they’re against the one extreme, which was represented by Hitler’s regime, that it’s only possible to fight with another extreme, that democracy as a political system had failed, hadn’t managed to defend itself. And that the only truly strong opponent, and guarantor that Hitler’s rule and Hitler’s regime won’t happen again, is a Communist regime.

These, idealistic reasons, led me to joining the Party in January of 1948. Even though it’s not possible to understand it unilaterally. By my nature I wasn’t a Communist, I had been raised in a democratic spirit, I came from a bourgeois family. In those days everyone’s origins were carefully investigated and a bourgeois origin was dangerous, it represented a huge impediment and a big minus for your profile.

But I was an orphan, and had lived through hard times during the war, so in my case it didn’t maybe play such a big role, but of course it was nothing positive. I tried to accept Communism as a thought, as an ideology, but perhaps precisely because I had a different nature, I suppressed my doubts and my notions that despite everything, that democracy is something we should respect, even if it did fail, it does have some good points.

This all was something unconscious, because what did I, a seventeen year old kid, know about democracy? The fact remains, that in this sense I wasn’t one of those enthusiastic, unthinking and herd-mentality types, who at meetings clapped and shouted ‘three cheers for Stalin!’ and ‘long live the Soviet Union!’

Or could have been beside himself with joy when he marched in a 1st May parade, or saw some Communist leader at a meeting; I really wasn’t like that. I had to fight within myself with what in those days were called the residuals of bourgeois thinking.

All expressions of these so-called relics were very closely watched by the other Communists, who were leading functionaries at the school, and very carefully recorded everything that didn’t agree with their ideas of what a young Communist nation-builder should look like.

When February came, I would say it something like this: with my intellect I accepted it as some sort of solution, but my heart was certainly not a hundred percent on that side. Certainly not that. I knew that something good was ending.

That now was beginning something that I intellectually understood, I had to study the writings of Marx, Stalin and similar, and orient myself in Communist ideology, but in my heart I was sorry that it was the end of an era, where discussion, opposition, expression of opinions other than Communist ones were possible. So I didn’t blend in with the crowd, the crowd always provoked me to questions that were non-conformist.

But of course I had to be careful to not express myself out loud. If a person wanted to be at school and wanted to finish his studies, he had to be careful in what he expressed. He couldn’t show that

he didn’t belong to the collective, that he wasn’t one with it. The school had a big political police presence.

There were people there, who very closely watched our behavior; everything was recorded in cadre critiques. Every few months they conducted so-called vetting. I never hurt anyone, but naturally I didn’t want to hurt myself either, by saying that this is nonsense, empty talk, an incorrect opinion.

Of course, the time of the Slansky trials 22 was while I was at the school, but again it didn’t really affect me. I felt that there was something bad here, that there’s something here that’s not right, what is dangerous and what is a symptom of unfortunate developments, but I thought it better to turn away from it. I said to myself, that after all I, as a Jewish boy, can’t sympathize with those sentenced Jews, with those Zionists, because then that stigma would fall on me as well.

So I withdrew and said to myself, that the Party has a reason to say this, so I rather won’t think too much. It was however a mistake, it was my shame, that I didn’t see through it even back then, but in that atmosphere that existed, it wasn’t possible, and it wouldn’t have been good, because if I would have seen through it, I would have had to have been expelled or would have had to drop out of school.

In 1953, Gottwald 23 died. That was time of deep sorrow in the nation. Of course at school there were official speeches and tears, mainly girls sobbed emotionally at the loss, the horrible wound, moreover it wasn’t just Gottwald, shortly before that, Stalin had also died.

Everyone tried to outdo each other in expressions of grief, I don’t know anymore if black armbands were worn, but in any case laughter was a crime. It really was a time when a person had to very obviously show what a loss had afflicted this nation and the Party and all progressive people in the world. Of course, it was a farce.

A farce in a time of horror, when one knew that everywhere there was someone waiting and watching him. Who is making notes of his statements and who is watching his behavior, speech, opinions. We lived in a police state and went to police school.

Expulsion of people was common. For example, one colleague dug up Trotsky 24 somewhere and began to read him. But Trotsky’s book, that was a crime. That was enough to get burned at the stake. It was discovered in his personal possessions, and so he was immediately expelled. Really a horrible time.

On the other hand, we were young; I was twenty, twenty-one, really, I was making up for my lost youth. I had spent the best years of my youth in prison or in hospitals, so I was also beginning to want to live a real life, have loves and so on, and while I was still handicapped by my condition, in spite of that a person wanted to have some interests, tried to go out and have fun: there were various clubs, dancing, singing... Fun was limited in various ways, but still, it was a certain escape from a regimented political life.

During my studies, in 1952, I also met my future wife. She was named Libuse Kvasnickova, was three years younger than me and came from Moravia. We met at the school residence in Opletalova Street, where I used to go see my friends, to hold various parties or rehearsed all sorts of amusing theatre performances. We began to go out together, and after two years, while we were

still in school, in 1954, we were married.

Libuse was fairly politically conscious, more of proletarian origin, even though her father was a policeman, so not really a proletarian. After the war their entire family devoted themselves to politics and joined the Communist party. My wife was a committed member of the Czechoslovak Socialist Youth Movement.

I think that she looked at me with some sort of detachment, because she could see that I wasn't as much a believer as she was, that in fact in private I was willing to tell so-called reactionary jokes, which was a huge insult, it wasn't allowed.

But under my influence she became more civilized and very soon she turned into a normal girl. We had a student wedding at the Old Town city hall; I had practically no money to pay for it. It was really student-style, it was on 30th April 1954 and right the next day we went to the [May Day] parade.

In those days we'd go parade through Prague, the entire school took part. It was a farce, we were supposed to celebrate 1st May, and our party and government, our leaders. After the wedding we lived, together with Mrs. Kopska, in the apartment on Masna Street. In the fall, our daughter Sarka was born.

After finishing school, I started to work at the Military Historical Institute. Up until 1955, the main enemy of all faithful Communists was Tito 25. He was a traitor and all accusations in the Slansky trials rested in the fact that it was a Titoist, Zionist group.

Lev Haas, who also experienced Terezin, later completely discredited himself by the fact that in every edition of Rude Pravo [newspaper with a leftist-oriented editorial policy] there was his picture of the bloody dog Tito, together with other Imperialist criminals, such as Eisenhower, MacArthur. But Tito always commanded them, and blood dripped from his hands. In them he held an axe, with which he wanted to commit murders. You could also be expelled from the Party for associating with Yugoslavs, simply put: Yugoslavia with Tito at its head was our enemy.

But then, in 1955, Khrushchev 26 visited Belgrade, got off the plane, and Tito was waiting for him at the airport. And Khrushchev addressed him 'my dear comrade Tito.' Well, that was a shock for me. I said to myself, I must be dreaming. Such a bloodstained cur, this agent of imperialism, this embodiment of all horrible, evil and disgusting, is suddenly our dear comrade? That's a fraud, I said to myself.

Now I know that you've fooled me. Now I know, that what I was concealing in my heart and what I was afraid to show, is the truth, you're criminals. Of course it wasn't possible to immediately switch from Communist thoughts to anti-Communism. In this behavior and thinking I wasn't alone.

We tried to reorganize Communism in some fashion, to reform it. We tried to in some fashion pick holes in the ideology of one clairvoyant and omniscient thought, Communist truth, we wanted to point out the crimes that were happening. That, however, wasn't an easy thing.

In Czechoslovakia, practically the entire intellectual front in the humanities, philosophers, historians, journalists, writers, who had up to now been Communists, tried to reform Communism;

we tried to subvert that infallible Party. That intellectual front was so huge, that no one knew what to do with it. Functionaries and leading Party ideologues were saying that we were paid from the West by revisionists and American imperialists. That it's all some sort of intrigue, some sort of fraud, some sort of conspiracy.

Of course, no one was getting anything; it was an attempt at purification by people that realized that they had believed in something that turned out to be a fraud, something so horrible. That's why they now tried to in some way improve it, regenerate it. Naturally, we were idealists; that regime couldn't be rehabilitated, that regime needed to be destroyed. For a long time though, we couldn't bring up the courage to do that, because the idea of socialism as a just system that could benefit society was still sympathetic to us.

We believed, that if you set out in the right direction, and if the right people take charge, it can be fixed somehow. I myself was always looking for some model that would combine socialism with democracy. That would combine an Eastern system with a Western one, I was looking for a third way, which of course was also nonsense, but I simply didn't want to give up the idea of reforming socialism somehow. A person wasn't reborn all at once.

A person only realized that Communism is a crime. That Stalinism is a crime. That the Soviet Union is an imperialistic, criminal state. But this, after all, doesn't mean putting socialism on the scrap heap! There can still be an idea and practice that could be realized, and would bring the world some good. In this was the schizophrenia and problem of the generation that I represented.

At the Military Historical Institute I got to the question of Czechoslovak resistance in the West during World War II, which of course was a huge taboo. For one, Benes 27 was a gangster, and all those that fought in the West were criminals, most or all of them were accomplices of imperialism, so after February they were in prisons.

I and another colleague, Eduard Cejka, tried to describe this history more objectively. Not objectively, that wasn't possible, but at least to show that they weren't all reactionaries, that on the contrary, they were people that fought against Hitlerism, for the Republic, that they were people that should be given credit.

But that was a shock for the political workers in the army. They almost lynched us for that. We wrote a book, that when a person reads it today, he would say is horrible, but unfortunately it wasn't possible to write it in any other way.

The important thing isn't that it contains rubbish, the important thing is the theme, that it's written about soldiers in the West, who weren't imperialists, who fought for freedom. That book met with an amazing response. It even won some prize in a Freedom Fighters Union contest, but for a long time the censors didn't allow its publication, that didn't happen until the 1960s.

We put on many lectures across the entire country, they were full, former soldiers from the West would come to them, those that had already been released from jail at the beginning of the 1960s. Of course, it was a sensational thing for them that someone had finally begun to talk about them as people that had helped free the country. I recall that at one lecture one former soldier came forward and said to me, 'You know, I fought for our country. But now, if we again had the situation where someone would be threatening our country, and my son joined the army, I'd rather break his

legs than let him go fight for it.' That really engraved itself deeply into my memory.

Khrushchev's secret speech, which he gave in 1956 – at that time I still worked in that military institute – of course in some fashion became publicly known. We knew it after a fashion, and in Party organizations people started discussing what Stalinism had really been and what crimes it carried with it.

At one meeting I imprudently compared the methods of Party politics and police to the methods of the Gestapo. Which the 'politruks' [or political officer, representative of the Czechoslovak Communist Party responsible for politically educational matters] made a note of. It was immediately investigated, the secret police came to see me; they even tried to draft me as a collaborator... They wanted to expel me from the Party. It was a very dangerous situation.

In the end they took away my ability to do research, they gave me a second-rate position at the institute, so the period on the cusp of the 1950s and 1960s was a very difficult one for me. In fact, I was ostracized, even my former colleagues, friends, who had started at the institute with me, didn't want to have anything to do with me... in the end it's always like that. When someone falls out of favor, it's better to distance yourself.

At the beginning of the 1960s the time of horrors passed, it was again somewhat freer, and I got an offer from the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, to concern myself with international and Czechoslovak politics under their auspices. I accepted, in 1963 I transferred to an institute that concerned itself with the history of Eastern Europe.

During my studies of Czechoslovak-Soviet relations, however, I came across things that were very dangerous and even more explosive than the issue of Czechoslovak soldiers in the West. That's why I more or less only gathered material; when I began to write a book, they threw me out. I did then publish the book as a 'samizdat' 28, but it wasn't until after 1989 that I could really concern myself with it seeing the light of day. I consider it to be my life's work.

The time of the 1960s was mainly political, I gave loads of lectures, about Benes, about soldiers in the West, about February, about the resistance, about the situation during the Protectorate. Here in those days it was claimed that the Communists had been the biggest fighters against Hitlerism, we were refuting that falsehood, because on the contrary, up until 1941 the Communists didn't fight against Hitler at all.

Opposition to Hitler was mainly composed of the citizenry; the Communists were concentrating on usurping power after the war, not fighting Hitler. Of course this was all news. Everyone stood in amazement when we, the historians, who had access to secret materials, were telling them this. And can you imagine what sort of a shock it was for Communist functionaries, when they heard about it? How we, also Communists, are disrupting the Party and social monolith...

My wife also worked at the Academy of Sciences, though before that she had worked at the Central State Archive, but because she fairly often came into contact with foreigners, the secret police were interested in her, and one day they told her that she can't work in the secret document archive. They didn't jail or fire her, but they gave her another position, for a few years after that she participated in the creation of an encyclopedic dictionary at the Encyclopedic Institute of the Academy of Sciences.

Our daughter was cared for by Mrs. Kopska; she was like a grandmother to her, Granny. Actually, she shifted all of her love to her. It was another generation that Mrs. Kopska took care of. My wife was working, as opposed to my mother during my childhood, so it really was Anci who devoted herself to Sarka the most during her childhood. Back then it was the custom to put children in school; Sarka also attended for some time, but Granny would always pick her up and go to the park or the playground with her.

She cooked porridge for her, when she was crying I said, 'for Pete's sake, let her cry.' But Anci said no, that she can't let her cry. She was probably right: a small child constantly needs some sort of company. So she'd go to her, console her, read her fairy tales, lull her to sleep...She definitely was more afraid for Sarka than we were.

When she was sick, it frightened her. We didn't concern ourselves very much with it, so what, small children tend to have fevers. As my granddaughter told me, my daughter still thinks about her a lot, and talks about her a lot; after all, Sarka did experience the most beautiful years of her childhood with her.

Anci died in the winter of 1963. She was already ill for several years before her death; she had cancer. She died in the Hospital 'na Frantisku,' it wasn't a very good hospital. We did go and visit her, but we couldn't secure her quality medical care. I certainly took her death as the death of another member of my family. Of course the entire family attended the funeral, even my father-in-law came. The ceremony was in Strasnice and Anci is buried in the cemetery in Sarka. She's got an urn there. Her son is also buried in the same grave.

Of course, today I regret it...I regret everything. Back then I wasn't yet interested in those questions that I would ask her today. Back then, I was beginning to be interested in a different lifestyle, I didn't ask what and how things had been. I wasn't interested in it until now. Perhaps everyone or at least the majority of them has certain regrets regarding their parents, those who raised them. The people that were responsible for their childhood. It's like that one poet says: you want to pay the debt, but there's no one left to pay.

Her loss was especially hard for Sarka, she cried a lot over her. But in the end she was already big, so she began to go to school by herself, she was already taking care of herself. After elementary school she went to a high school of the arts in the Vinohrady neighborhood. She had and has a considerable talent for art.

We would go on vacation for three or four weeks, mainly in Bohemia, because it was the easiest, or we would send our daughter to some friends out in the country, so she wouldn't have to be in Prague during the summer, and then we would travel to see her. In the 1960s we managed about two or three times to go to Bulgaria or Yugoslavia, to the sea.

As is well known, the 1960s meant a certain freeing up of conditions for life in Czechoslovakia. It wasn't for example all that difficult to go to the West for various scientific conferences. I was a founding member of the Committee for the History of the National Struggle for Liberation, so also thanks to that I was invited to foreign conferences.

I went to Vienna, Berlin; I saw a world that was for us absolutely unthinkable. Goods everywhere, fruit and especially electronics, clothes – at that time jeans were starting to be popular, finding

them was a problem, and when someone had them, that was fantastic.

You could naturally find similar goods in Tuzex [a special store with foreign goods that weren't normally available in Communist countries], but still, to see those full display windows, those riches in Vienna and Berlin, neon lights and night life... simply a different world. Yeah, today it's boring, today the West doesn't entice me at all, I have neon here too, I have the same goods here too, so what would I do there? The only reason I go there is for the historical sights. But in those days the main goal was to go to a department store.

We could buy things for about a thousand, two thousand crowns. Of course, all sorts of things were smuggled in, or our German friends, when they came for a visit, brought us gifts and various things, it wasn't again all that impermeable.

Women mainly bought shoes, handbags and similar things: that was a miracle here. Once my wife was returning with her sister from East Germany; they had bought some shoes that hadn't made it here yet, and then they trembled with fear, hoping that they wouldn't be confiscated at the border. Because it also happened that he customs officials, when you bought something that exceeded the allowed value, confiscated it. There were various controls at the border, like for example they delayed me for hours and hours when I was going to Germany or Austria, those were odious scenes.

In August of 1968 I received an invitation to a conference that was held each year in the Austrian Alps. I accepted it, my wife and daughter accompanied me to Vienna, then they returned home, and the occupation [see Prague Spring] 29 surprised them here. I experienced the occupation in Alpbach.

I remember how I saw on TV when our notorious delegation arrived in Moscow. I very well recall their cowardice. The occupation, that was confusion, chaos, no one was checking anything at the borders, no one knew what was going to be. The Soviets were here, but they hadn't yet forbidden travel, and so a great number of people left after 1968, they loaded up their cars and left.

My wife and daughter returned to me to Austria. We had a fall vacation paid for in Yugoslavia, so we left for there. The top leaders of our country, President Svoboda 30, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Dubcek 31, and the then premier of the National Assembly, Smrkovsky 32 were home again, that was also a representation par excellence, but they said that the situation had somewhat calmed down, that we should return. We returned, and saw what was going on here.

At the beginning of 1969 I still got a one-year stipendium to go to Germany. At that time I was considering emigrating. The family came to see me, it had still been a short time, when normalization wasn't yet so firmly entrenched and you could still travel.

In Germany they were offering me a position at a university, so I had the possibility of staying. If I had had the support of my family, I'd perhaps have done it. But my family didn't want to emigrate, and I didn't want to live in Germany alone, so when my stipendium ended, I returned home. Then they threw me out of the Party, because apparently I wasn't worthy of being a member, they threw me out of the Academy [Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences], well, so I went and pumped water.

They also threw my wife out of the Party and out of the Academy [Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences], she then went to work as a cleaning woman. A long fourteen-year career as a cleaning woman awaited her, which she did until retirement.

Our daughter also had various problems, I think that at the end of the 1960s she was still a member of the Pioneers, but they weren't accepting her anywhere any more, it was unthinkable that the daughter of an expelled person would be involved in anything. She didn't even want to be. I think that she quickly realized what was what.

Other things also went on, above all they also harassed her, if she had a driver's license, then she had to take the exams again, they summoned my wife for retesting, my driver's license they confiscated, when our daughter wanted to go on an art class trip to France; they didn't let her... Mainly though she didn't get to go further in school. [She wasn't allowed to go on to university due to her parent's political opinions.]

Not every company would employ people like me. There were special companies that could employ these apostates, these traitors, dissidents: for example we could clean windows, work in boiler rooms... And then there was also this company called Water Resources, whose employees drove around the Czech countryside in trailers and drilled wells, pumped water out of them and measured the flow.

So for a year I did that. For about a year I drove around in a trailer, together with my historian colleague Jan Kren and Petr Pithart [journalist, dissident, now a politician], and there were many more of us in this group. To constantly be driving around in a trailer, even in the winter, was no fun, so I left. For some time I had a work agreement with this one company that provided taxi services to various companies.

They would for example call, saying that so and so wants to be driven someplace, so I drove him there. I made money by counting kilometers traveled and time spent on the trip. But it was of course very dangerous, because it wasn't a real job. There was the potential danger that they'd jail me as a parasite, I didn't have insurance... Then, through some connection, I got into a hospital, where there were decent doctors, and they advised me to go see a psychiatrist, that I could have a complex from the concentration camps, and be deemed an invalid.

That worked, and in 1975 I got a disability pension. Thanks to that I could stay at home and work in peace. While it was a meager existence, it was a free one. It was, after all, some sort of financial certainty. There was little money, but prices were also low, so a person could get by on it.

Sometime around Christmas 1976, I think it was Milos Hajek, my historian colleague, also a member of the Committee for the History of the National Struggle for Liberation, came by and told me that a project was being prepared, which wasn't illegal, on the contrary, that its goal was for the government to observe its own laws and regulations. And I agreed without hesitation, signed it and so I became one of the first of about 150 signatories of Charter 77 33.

It immediately generated a great hue and cry, even though almost no one read the text of the Charter, because it wasn't allowed to be published; only Radio Free Europe 34 and the Voice of America broadcast about it, or it made the rounds in samizdat form. People didn't care though, they immediately took a stand against the traitors and subversives, signed the anti-Charter. This

happened even in the National Theater, to this day it's the shame of Czech culture.

They then searched my apartment, they turned my books upside down, they were looking for some sort of counterrevolutionary writing. They managed to find the manuscript of my book. They immediately put it to one side; it seemed suspicious to them. They were however these quite primitive types, and so when I saw them looking the other way, I took it again and hid it somewhere else. If they would have confiscated it, that would have been the end of my book, because I hadn't yet made a copy.

They confiscated lots of trivial things, for example a children's rubber stamp set, which children use to put together rubber letters of the alphabet. Those idiots thought that it was a corpus delicti and that I'm using it for illegal magazine activities. They then wanted to search the cellar. I went there with them, and said to myself, 'boys, now I'm going to punish you.'

The cellar was covered in a layer of dust, and it was clear even to them that no counter-revolution had been taking place here in the recent past, so they wanted to leave again. But I said, 'no, no, you're being paid to perform a proper job here, I pay my taxes, so you have to search here too...' I wasn't really even some big fish for them, other Charter signatories, for example those who were its spokesmen, were worse off.

We Charterists basically continued to meet as friends. This circle of acquaintances, those who had been in the Committee for the History of the National Struggle for Liberation, they all signed the Charter. So we continued to meet as Charterists, but also as friends, colleagues, historians. And as well, other friends used to come over to wash our windows.

It wasn't expensive, so we said to ourselves, why should we do it ourselves, when we can call a company, and the company always sent over some friend of ours that worked there. So that's how Dienstbier [Czech journalist, politician, diplomat] came to visit us, Cardinal Vlk [Czech dissident, Catholic priest, now Cardinal of Prague], Dobrovsky [Czech dissident, diplomat], Jaroslav Sedivy and also Rudolf Battek.

Rudolf Battek is this enfant terrible of social democracy. He was arrested several times, and once, on 28th October, they came for him right when he was washing our windows. The day before he was supposed to have reported to the police, but he didn't do it, and the next day he was scheduled to be at our place.

Battek was washing windows and suddenly someone rang. At first two came, but when he refused to leave with them, saying that he'd go but that first he had to finish his work, they called a third as reinforcement. Well, it was a horrible situation, him in the window, yelling, that if they took one more step he'd smash the window and jump. In the end he even broke the window.

My wife, who's very resourceful, was also already quite agitated, but it occurred to her to pretend to have a hysterical fit. She threw herself on the ground, waved her arms about and shouted that he'd jump out of the window, that they should leave. So they got scared – one in the window, another writhing around on the ground – and they left. Police coming over to our place, that was customary.

We were also wiretapped. One Saturday, when my wife was at home alone, she was lying on the bed and heard some sort of commotion behind the wall, scratching, drilling and something being pulled... It was very obvious, because we lived next door to a school, where no one had any business being on a Saturday afternoon.

Everything was quiet, the neighbors had left Prague, there was hardly anyone out on the streets. It lasted about half an hour, and when it ended, she looked out the window and saw four men with briefcases leaving the school. It was clear that they had installed a listening device. We didn't really care: we spoke politically openly, so they could listen to it for all we cared.

After 1989 [see Velvet Revolution] 35 a plan of our apartment that they had used during the installation of the bug came into my hands. One of our good friends, who we used to see quite often, had drawn it.

My wife worked for fifteen years at the Academy and another fifteen years with a bucket as a cleaning woman, and that at three different places. She had problems even finding any sort of work: she was refused at about forty-nine places before she even found something, thanks to some connection.

As a cleaning woman she wasn't very well paid, she got about a third of her former salary, but it did have the advantage that she could basically do the work anytime and I could also help her out at work or take her place occasionally. The place where she worked the longest, and the time from which she has the fondest memories, was when she cleaned at the Theatrical Institute on Celetna [Street]: it had been reconstructed, a nice environment, they treated her decently...

There was a hall there, where today's Kaspar Theater is, and in the morning the Smetana Quartet always rehearsed in that hall. So she grew to quite like it. She more or less had free time, during that time she began to do yoga; my wife is also a vegetarian. In 1987 she retired.

Each evening at home we listened to Free Europe, however Free Europe couldn't be heard in Prague, so I learned Polish and listened to it in Polish. That wasn't jammed. Then we also listened to the Voice of America and a bit of the BBC. My daughter used to say, 'hey, dad, I need you to tell me for school, about this or that situation, but please, don't tell it like Free Europe tells it, tell it like I'm supposed to tell it in school.' My daughter very well knew what was what, what you could and couldn't, she really did see through the regime quite early on.

My daughter wasn't allowed to go to university, even though she had the best marks, the best recommendations, wrote the best entrance exams, but Brodova was simply on the index, so they automatically put her aside and she didn't interest them any more. She then worked for a few years as a window dresser in various shops.

In the 1980s this one American came to Prague, my future son-in-law, Richard Hyland. Before that he had studied for some time in Germany, and had gotten a recommendation from one of my friends, that when he'd be in Prague, he should stop by and see the Brods. So he stopped by and he and Sarka fell for each other.

Richard is a Jew and it was actually through him that Sarka got to Judaism and began to be more interested in it; we didn't raise her in it. It wasn't until that time that I told her what had happened

to me and my family during the war. Otherwise we didn't talk about it at home.

When she asked me what that number on my arm was, I said it was a phone number. I didn't much want to talk about it; all in all I actually don't like talking about myself. By now I've hopefully managed to partially overcome that, but for a long time before I didn't want to talk about it.

Maybe I was ashamed of it. I was ashamed that it was this time of wretchedness. Humiliation and wretchedness. I came away from the war with complexes: that I'm not an adequate and complete person, that I always have to stylize myself into the role of a full citizen. My remembrances and everything somehow mixed it up and ruined it. At that time Sarka didn't press me very much. She only began to press me when she was grown up.

I don't know if my wife or Mrs. Kopska said something to Sarka; the children weren't very interested in it. I think that back then no one was all that interested in our wartime fates, interest in the Holocaust is a phenomenon of the last ten, fifteen years. During the time of socialism talking about it wasn't very desirable. Jews were basically Zionists, and that was an extension of American imperialism. Israel, Jews, all that was very suspicious.

Not long ago I got together with my former colleagues from the Military Historical Institute, and they said that they had no idea that I had experienced something like that. And they had worked with me for several years. People knew I was a Jew, but it either didn't interest them, or they were too embarrassed to ask about it. The embarrassment was mutual. I was embarrassed that I had been such a wretch, and they were embarrassed that they had spent the war in calm and safety. Probably, maybe, I don't know.

So when Sarka met her Jewish man, she began to be interested in my life. She asked me to write down my reminiscences, so I did it. I don't know what sort of an effect it had on her. In this respect Sarka is an introvert and doesn't show her feelings. Whether afterwards she took a larger, deeper interest in the Holocaust, I can't say. I also don't know who else she discussed it with. None of my relatives returned, and I didn't associate with anyone who had a similar fate.

I practically didn't even have any Jewish friends that I could talk to about it. They lived abroad and I could renew contact with them only after the revolution. At that time I also began to associate with fellow Auschwitz prisoners living here.

Before, I basically didn't at all know that there were some other Auschwitz prisoners living in Prague. I myself didn't look for them, for it's true that I only began to concern myself more deeply with these issues fifteen years ago. Back then, there really wasn't any literature on this subject. And if there was, it was only propaganda. But several times I did take some friends to Terezin.

During Communist times, a visit to Terezin was a farce. They didn't talk about Jews at all, all visits went to the Little Fortress, and there they would take pictures of the sign 'Arbeit Macht Frei,' and thought that this was the ghetto. In the Jugendheim, where we had lived, there was a police museum.

Once I went to Terezin with one American that concerned himself with the Holocaust. He wanted to know where in Terezin the jail was. We found out that it had been in some police station, so we went there to look in the cellar, where there was some policeman that was showing us everything.

He however didn’t know that my companion was an American.

When he found this out, he got into a panic and forbade us to take pictures. But despite this we managed to take a few pictures. Also, once an old lady relative of mine came from Germany and wanted to see the barracks in Terezin where she had lived. I took her there, the officer that came out of the gate was at first quite accommodating, but when we were to give him our identification, and she presented her German ID, that was the end. No visit took place; they didn’t let us in at all.

My future son-in-law’s parents moved to America at the beginning of the 20th century, so the events of World War II practically passed them by. Rick didn’t really come into contact with the Holocaust until his studies in Europe. Sarka and Richard were married in 1982.

They had a Jewish wedding, my daughter converted to Judaism, as she wasn’t a halakhah Jewess. The mikveh was in the Vltava River, where Sarka ritually cleansed herself, then she had to go have a shower, to wash off the dirt that floats in the Vltava.

The wedding took place at the Old New Synagogue and at the Jewish City Hall. It was a big event, dozens of guests came, as well as her father-in-law from America, who paid for it all. Of course, the police also took an interest, but the 1980s were after all already a more relaxed time.

For Sarka, marrying Richard was a liberation. From the 1980s the rule was that when a girl married a foreigner, she could automatically leave with him. So first they moved to Germany, where they lived for a time, and after about two years they moved to America, where they live to this day.

At first they lived in Washington, where Sarka studied and graduated in design from Yale, then they lived for some time in Miami, where her husband lectured at university. Richard is a lawyer and lectures a lot, now they’re again living on the East Coast, in Philadelphia. Sarka works as a graphic designer: she designs book jackets, exhibitions, and also lectures at university. She’s very lucky in that what she’s doing is really her hobby, she does what she enjoys.

During the 1980s it was already easier to go out of the country, the regime took into account if you had some close relatives outside of the country, so about once a year we were allowed to visit her. Then they didn’t even check how often we met our daughter outside of the country, we simply got an exit visa and we could leave.

The last time we were out like this was in the summer of 1989, in West Berlin. When we were then crossing the border on the way back, they again tried to make it as unpleasant as possible, they did a through search and confiscated books that we had with us.

During the time of the Communist regime, the environment in Czechoslovakia suffered extensive damage. We lived on Masna Street, so just a little ways away from Republic Square, which apparently had the worst air in all of Prague. In the Old Town, where we lived, it was apparently unbreathable.

So my wife suffered from various breathing difficulties, but it never happened to me. They tell me that I have no feeling left, no smell and taste buds, so I’m immune to dirty air. Really, to me it never seemed that bad. Living on Masna Street also had its advantages, there’s this little square, and basically back then it was a village.

No cars drove through, people sat outside, in the evening they would gather to debate things...It was really this oasis of calm. Today it's all bars, lots of tourists, normal shops have disappeared. Today it's not such an idyll, cars drive through there too.

The summer of 1989 was this exciting time. Changes in Poland [see Events of 1989] 36, in Hungary had already partially taken place, then in the fall there was the exodus of Germans, that was still before the wall had fallen in Germany. Germans tried to get to the West, first through Hungary and then through us.

I remember this: I was going to the German embassy in the Lesser Quarter, and there were throngs of Germans there, their cars were parked all over Petrin and the Lesser Quarter. They were leaving them there; they were trying with all their might to get on the grounds of the German embassy.

And then our November was nearing. When the year 1989 was just beginning, there were demonstrations in Prague, called Palach's Week. [Palach, Jan (1948-1969): a Czech student, who on 16th January 1969 immolated himself in Prague's Wenceslaus Square in protest to the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the armies of the Warsaw Pact. Palach's Week – a number of protest demonstrations to mark the 20th anniversary of Jan Palach's immolation in January of 1989.

The week of protests culminated with a procession to Palach's grave in Vsetaty. The police intervened harshly, and thousands of people never reached the goal.] The police intervened during them, so I experienced how they used water cannons against us, arrested people and beat them with truncheons.

I myself avoided any direct conflict with the police, when they started to use the water cannons, I simply always hid behind some corner, so that they wouldn't mow me down. It certainly wasn't anything pleasant to get hit by a stream of cold water in January. So I was some sort of participant, but didn't suffer any harm. Then of course there were demonstrations on 28th October, that was already all approaching 17th November.

On 17th November, students announced a demonstration at Albertov, I and some friends went there as well. It was already this unusual atmosphere, but I don't think you could characterize it as expressly revolutionary. Some slogans about truth were bandied about for example, but I don't think it was explicitly anti-Communist yet.

We proceeded up to Vysehrad, I think that they wanted to put some flowers on Macha's 37 grave, then, spontaneously, the procession headed back down, grew in strength and at the bottom of Vysehrad split in two. One part headed along the riverfront, it finally arrived at Narodni Avenue, and the second part, where I was, went via Vysehradska Street, where on that little square by the Botanical Gardens a cordon of policemen stopped us. There was no violence, the procession stopped and waited.

I didn't know that the procession had another offshoot, so I said to myself, what's the point of sitting here and looking at these cops, we skirted it via some side street, got to Charles Square and 'see you,' went home. I had no idea at all that something was going to happen. My wife was at that time somewhere out of Prague.

In the evening I turned on Free Europe and now they were announcing that there's a massacre on Narodni Avenue. I realized that it's no joke any more, that it's something serious now. The following day the actors of the Realistic Theater announced a strike, then students joined them and the whole thing began to gain momentum, it began to be clear that it was a revolution.

A revolution doesn't always have to be bloody, revolution means a fundamental social change. The end of one social system and the beginning of a different one. Without a doubt, in this aspect it was a revolution. The communist government fell, there were demonstrations on Wenceslaus Square...

At the beginning, the TV stations boycotted the events, but after a couple of days it was already clear to everyone that there's something happening that can't be suppressed, can't be silenced. I had friends at Melantrich; its building stands to this day on Wenceslaus Square, even though Melantrich itself no longer functions.

Here on the balcony was the Civic Forum center, speeches were made here. I wasn't on the balcony, but it was made possible for me to watch everything from its window, so I was in the thick of it. It was amazing, there were banners saying 'End of one-party rule' everywhere, simply a superb atmosphere.

So after waiting for so long we finally had a change. On Letna [plain] there were gatherings... We did have some fears, that it could still all come to nothing, but basically the situation had changed so much, that the Soviet Union wouldn't have risked taking responsibility for there being some sort of bloodbath, and our leaders, well, they were also cowards, so the People's Militias withdrew and the army stayed in its barracks.

Each day brought something new, suddenly the government wasn't composed of just Communists. Then it came out that there were to be more Communists in it, so people protested yet again, there was simply always something going on... There was a lot of talk about how yet again we were the last. That it's another disgrace. Poland had already fallen, Hungary had fallen, in Germany the Wall had fallen, only Czechoslovakia again looked like it was going to be the last to free itself.

Of course we told ourselves that the all-pervasive euphoria wouldn't last long. That in the beginning people will be thrilled, but after a time, when it's apparent that no revolution can fulfill all expectations that they put into it, and that power will be assumed not by idealists, who have plenty of ideals but no organization, but by the boys with the sharp elbows, then it became clear to me that in a few years people were going to reminisce about Communism.

Because it was cheap here, people didn't need freedom, of what use was freedom of speech to them, when they could sit in pubs and drink cheap beer? A person who wasn't stigmatized got out of the country on an exit visa once in a while, so people lacked practically nothing.

What they stole, they had. Stealing was permitted, because the government said: we're pretending that we're paying you, you're pretending that you're working. And so people stole, it was absolutely common, whoever didn't steal was a fool, and so people didn't lack much.

Communism wasn't as bloody as it had been in the 1950s. Husak 38 was by then senile, then that idiot Jakes 39 assumed the presidency, people made fun of him... so of course, the police were still tough, they always had truncheons in their hands, but if you didn't go to a demonstration, nothing

happened to you. Thus dissatisfaction was really only among the intellectuals and people who were somehow stigmatized. It was huge luck that the CKD workers also joined the demonstrators.

The problem, however, was that there was no one to hand the government over to. I think that dissidents like Havel 40, Vondra [Sasha (Alexandr) Vondra, born 1961, geographer, signatory of Charter 77. In February 1989 sentenced to two months' jail; from 2nd January 1989 to 6th January 1990 the spokesman of Charter 77.

After the start of his jail term, Vaclav Havel filled in his function as spokesman for 52 days], Maly [Czech dissident, Catholic priest, bishop] were really more spiritual people, who weren't particularly interested in power. So gradually power here was assumed by people who hadn't been any sort of fighters against Communism, but who knew how to go about things and managed to push their way in.

Now I could have returned to the Institute for Eastern European History. There was different management there now, but I was no longer used to any sort of discipline. I wanted to say and do what I wanted; I wasn't willing to listen to orders and observe some regulations, so I said my goodbyes after a year and a half and went back into retirement. Because there was no money, that institute ceased to exist anyways; it became part of the Historical Institute of the Academy of Sciences.

My wife and I were secured materially, our daughter was abroad, so she was able to help us. I also got some compensation for my stay in the concentration camp from the Czech government and from the Germans, which in the end helped us out, when we were buying this apartment.

The building where we were living on Masna Street was undergoing reconstruction, so that's why we had to move in the mid-1990s. We found a place to live in Bubenec. We had a lot of work with it when we were buying it, the apartment was in desolate condition, but we made it cozy and we enjoy living here. Then I could also publish what had earlier made the rounds only in samizdats, I could lecture, publish articles, I was paid for that, so it looked like we'd be financially secure; after all, we only had to look after the two of us.

When Israel was created, I didn't really reflect on it much. For one, in 1948 I was still ill, my inability to join society still lingered, so I really only began to be aware of Israel during the time of the Slansky trials and then mainly during the Six-Day-War 41.

Back then all intellectuals, including the Communist ones, were for Israel. Every hour I listened to the news on Free Europe or the BBC, so that I'd know what the situation at the front looked like. It was a terrible situation, if Israel hadn't attacked back then, they wouldn't exist now. That's precisely the question of a preventive war.

A preventive war is sometimes so necessary, a matter of life or death, that you can't argue about it. What pacifism? War is simply sometimes necessary, morally justifiable, while pacifism is sometimes morally absolutely rotten. Pacifism was in France before the war, why should they fight, when Verdun destroyed their entire male population? While in Germany there was no pacifism, and how did it end up?

That’s an absolutely clear thing, with my whole being, my whole reason I’m on the side of Israel. I know that it’s a very complex situation, after all, even within the scope of Israel there are constructive and destructive forces. But the main thing is for Israel to be able to find a partner with whom it’s possible to negotiate, who is trustworthy.

I don’t agree with Israel trading territory for peace, I also told them that there, when I visited Israel. Because you’ll make peace with one representative, they’ll then murder him, and so much for peace. And there won’t be territory, or peace. It’s good that we’re for peace, but the others must also honestly be for peace, and they have to be stable, have influence, so they can enforce it.

So we’ll yet see, what this Mahmud Abbas [former Palestinian premier and Yasser Arafat’s successor] is going to be like. It seems that he sincerely means it, but whether he’ll also have enough influence to manage to enforce it, I don’t know. So I’m not going to give anyone any advice. They themselves have to know if they can declare peace with someone, if they can withdraw from Gaza, if they can withdraw from the West Bank, all this they have to know themselves. But it’s a risk, that’s for certain.

I was in Israel once in 1996, at that time the Jewish Community had organized a trip for people that hadn’t been to Israel yet. A relatively inexpensive trip, I paid only about ten thousand [Czech crowns] for some expenses, and spent a week there. We lived in Natania in a hotel, and traveled all over the country. I’ll tell you this: I had mixed impressions of Israel.

On the one hand I admired the huge amount of work they’d done there, the irrigation and care for the countryside, on the other hand I was disappointed by the filth that exists there. So of course, the Golan Heights made a great impression on me. Here I realized how strategically important they are. I visited Jerusalem, I saw Yad Vashem 42, the Old City, we bathed in the Dead Sea, and it really is a sea that you can’t drown in.

It was an amazing experience, that I have to admit, but was I enthused by it? For one, when it comes to nature, for me it’s still this parched land. Of course they don’t have enough water to irrigate the entire country, so there, where they can, it’s amazing, but there’s still a huge amount of desert there.

And like I said, filth, there’s litter lying along the side of the road... well, so it’s not a country where I’d want to live, nope. For one it’s hot there, and I like northern lands more than southern ones. I visited Israel in October and it was still around 30 degrees. It’s true that it’s not as intolerable as Florida. For me Florida is absolutely intolerable, but I can’t even imagine what it’s like there for example in June.

My aunt Ruzena, the wife of Jindrich Petrovsky, lived in Israel at one time, as well as her son Mario with his wife. They moved there after the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, they had said to themselves that for sure it was going to be bad for Jews here, so they’re moving.

Aunt Ruzena’s daughter, my cousin Eva, was married to some doctor, so she didn’t go with them. In Israel they lived in Natania. Mario was educated as a chef, in fact he became a head chef in some hotel and they weren’t badly off. We maintained more or less only formal contact, for one what was I really supposed to write them, it wasn’t always desirable to maintain relations with Israel. Should I have written about how I’m living? That was impossible, there was censorship here,

so we only wrote some formalities in the manner of where we had been on vacation, really, it was quite formal communication.

When the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia fell, they returned and managed to get back a large amount of property that had belonged to the Petrovskys. My aunt isn't alive anymore, she died at a very advanced age, she was over ninety.

I used to go visit her often when she was here in Prague in the hospital. My cousin isn't alive any more either, and Mario commutes with his family between Prague and Israel, because they're still supposed to be there. We see each other, but not that often, we have different interests; we lead different lives.

Currently I'm for example keeping myself busy by lecturing at various lectures. Not that I have some sort of regular commitment or force my lectures on someone, but simply when someone wants, I do a lecture for them. For example, I've lectured for teachers, who were augmenting their education, I also lecture at various schools, both in Prague and outside of Prague. My one and only condition is for the people, like the students for example, to come voluntarily and have an interest in it. And it really doesn't happen that they'd behave impolitely, not pay attention or leave early. I always try to for example connect my telling about the Jewish genocide with perhaps some stories that are dramatic, so in that way it probably engages them.

We're practically the youngest generation that can still talk about the war from their reminiscences. Maybe there are some others, who were born during the war, perhaps in a concentration camp or ghetto, but those aren't capable of talking about it. While I remember the past, I remember the experiences, and what's more, I can enrich them with certain historical knowledge, compare personal experiences with general knowledge, so I think that on the whole it's interesting.

Of course, as soon as we disappear, then only the experts will be able to talk about it. I also do lectures here at the Jewish Education Center in Prague, and I go to Terezin with students, where I tell them about it... Once one of them asked me, if lecturing about the Holocaust is still a painful thing for me. So I said, that I'm a professional, that after all, I can't be moved by my fate during every lecture, by that I'd devalue the lecture in a major way.

You can't do that: have a hysterical fit during a lecture. A certain professionalism prevents you from expressing your emotions. You can say it with a certain amount of passion, with a certain subjectivity, but you can't succumb to fits, wring your hands, that can't be done.

As I've already said, a book I consider to be my life's work recently came out: it deals with relations between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union.

We have a granddaughter, she's named R. and was born ten years ago. She tells me that I'm this dinosaur, that is, a person from the last, twentieth century... Although she lives in America, she speaks perfect Czech, she even writes very well, for which I admire her.

I think that many Czech children wouldn't manage it as well. She comes to visit us several times a year. She always stays for some time, in the summer she's here for the entire holidays. She has friends here, we go to the theater, go on trips... Now she's going to be attending a different school,

so she’s looking forward to wearing a school uniform.

R. is being brought up as a Jewess. At home they for example celebrate Sabbath, earlier they used to eat in restaurants a lot, now they’re at home a lot. When they came to visit once and Chanukkah was supposed to be celebrated, we celebrated Chanukkah. R. was veiled as it’s supposed to be.

R. says that she likes Christians, because they have Christmas, we also celebrate Christmas. I think that in my daughter’s household, Jewish customs used to be observed a lot at least earlier on, earlier on they were very Orthodox, now I don’t know, how much they still are. For sure they eat kosher, they don’t eat pork.

Once, when we were over visiting them during the time of Passover, we weren’t allowed to bring any bread or rolls into the house. We’ve been over in America to visit them two or three times, now I don’t want to go there any more, the East Coast isn’t interesting for me.

Their lifestyle is such that they’re always working and we sit there and stare at the wall. I’d for example like to go have a look at the West Coast, to California, the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone Park, but that doesn’t come into consideration. I know Philadelphia, I know New York, I know Chicago, I know Washington, so there’s nothing there that I need to see or get to know. So I prefer it when they come here, here we have time for them.

R. knows what happened during the war and is very interested in it, of course. I try to help her in this, for example I took her to the Military Historical Museum for an exhibition about Heydrich, I tell her lots of stories...She wants to know various details, she’s still got these childlike questions. She for example also claims that she’s going to have three children and that one of them is going to be named Hanus, after my brother. Not Toman, that she’s got my genes, and that that’s enough for her.

I of course agree that the Czech Republic should be part of organizations like the European Union, NATO... It’s the only road that’s possible and is also necessary and good. If the European Union lasts, everything will be fine. The problem is that the European Union isn’t a country like America, which integrated all immigrants and made them into Americans.

A European will likely never be a European: he’ll be a Frenchman, a German, an Englishman... Maybe in a few generations it’ll change, in any case it’s going to be a long road. It’s very complex, full of pitfalls and misunderstandings, but it’s necessary to set out on it. So when we were voting on entry into the European Union, we voted in favor, and if we’re going to be voting on the European Constitution, I’ll vote for it as well.

As a child of the First Republic I was raised to be a patriot. I don’t feel myself to be one any more. For me, patriotism is a relic of the 19th or the middle of the 20th century. I feel myself to be a citizen of this country; I think that a citizen is a person who should be conscious of his rights and responsibilities toward this state.

I’m glad that I live in this country, but I always get angry, when someone tells me that he’s proud of being a Czech. I think that he should be ashamed of being a Czech. It’s enough to remember all of what Czechs caused, what sort of a tradition they have, that they’re not only those fabulous Hussites, who besides were quite the bastards, and so on and on.

So I’m not proud of being Czech, but I like this country, I like this language, I like this culture. On the other hand I also know the pitfalls associated with this country and with this people. I don’t feel any patriotism, I feel responsibility. So I try to behave like a person who somehow contributes to our good name.

- **Glossary**

1 Terezin/Theresienstadt: A ghetto in the Czech Republic, run by the SS. Jews were transferred from there to various extermination camps. It was used to camouflage the extermination of European Jews by the Nazis, who presented Theresienstadt as a ‘model Jewish settlement’.

Czech gendarmes served as ghetto guards, and with their help the Jews were able to maintain contact with the outside world. Although education was prohibited, regular classes were held, clandestinely. Thanks to the large number of artists, writers, and scholars in the ghetto, there was an intensive program of cultural activities.

At the end of 1943, when word spread of what was happening in the Nazi camps, the Germans decided to allow an International Red Cross investigation committee to visit Theresienstadt.

In preparation, more prisoners were deported to Auschwitz, in order to reduce congestion in the ghetto. Dummy stores, a cafe, a bank, kindergartens, a school and flower gardens were put up to deceive the committee.

2 February 1948: Communist take-over in Czechoslovakia. The ‘people’s democracy’ became one of the Soviet satellites in Eastern Europe. The state apparatus was centralized under the leadership of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (KSC). In the economy private ownership was banned and submitted to central planning. The state took control of the educational system, too. Political opposition and dissident elements were persecuted.

3 First Czechoslovak Republic (1918-1938): The First Czechoslovak Republic was created after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy following World War I. The union of the Czech lands and Slovakia was officially proclaimed in Prague in 1918, and formally recognized by the Treaty of St. Germain in 1919.

Ruthenia was added by the Treaty of Trianon in 1920. Czechoslovakia inherited the greater part of the industries of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the new government carried out an extensive land reform, as a result of which the living conditions of the peasantry increasingly improved.

However, the constitution of 1920 set up a highly centralized state and failed to take into account the issue of national minorities, and thus internal political life was dominated by the struggle of national minorities (especially the Hungarians and the Germans) against Czech rule. In foreign policy Czechoslovakia kept close contacts with France and initiated the foundation of the Little Entente in 1921.

4 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 Reichs 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, defence 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 theatres and cinemas, restaurants and cafés, swimming pools, libraries and other entertainment and sports centres.

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.

5 Hilsner Trial: In 1899 the Jew Leopold Hilsner was accused of ritual murder.

During the first trial proceedings the media provoked an anti-Jewish hysteria among the general public and in legislative bodies, as a result of which Hilsner was sentenced to death, despite the lack of any direct evidence. Both his ex officio counsel and President T. G. Masaryk tried to demythologize superstitions about the blood libel.

In 1901 Emperor Franz Josef I changed the sentence to life imprisonment but he did not allow a retrial probably out of fear of pogroms. In 1918 Hilsner was granted pardon by Emperor Charles.

6 Munich Pact: Signed by Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and France in 1938, it allowed Germany to immediately occupy the Sudetenland (the border region of Czechoslovakia inhabited by a German minority).

The representatives of the Czechoslovak government were not invited to the Munich conference. Hungary and Poland were also allowed to seize territories:

Hungary occupied southern and eastern Slovakia and a large part of Subcarpathia, which had been under Hungarian rule before World War I, and Poland occupied Teschen (Tesin or Cieszyn), a part of Silesia, which had been an object of dispute between Poland and Czechoslovakia, each of which claimed it on ethnic grounds. Under the Munich Pact, the Czechoslovak Republic lost extensive economic and strategically important territories in the border regions (about one third of its total area).

7 Nemcova, Bozena (1820–1862): born Barbora Panklova in Vienna into the family of Johann Pankl, a nobleman's coachman. She was significantly influenced by her upbringing at the hands of her grandmother Magdalena Novotna during the years 1825-29. In 1837 she was married to financial official Josef Nemec.

She contributed to a number of magazines. She was inspired by traditional folk stories to write seven collections of folk tales and legends and ten collections of Slovak fairy-tales and legends, which are generally a gripping fictional adaptation of fairy-tale themes.

Through her works Nemcova has to her credit the bringing together of the Czech and Slovak nations and their cultures. She is the author of travelogues and ethnographic sketches, realistic stories of the countryside (Crazy Bara, Mountain Village, Karla, The Teacher, At The Chateau and The Village Below) and the supreme novel Granny. Thanks to her rich folkloristic work and particularly her work Granny, Bozena Nemcova has taken her place among Czech national icons.

8 Spanish Civil War (1936-39): A civil war in Spain, which lasted from July 1936 to April 1939, between rebels known as Nacionales and the Spanish Republican government and its supporters. The leftist government of the Spanish Republic was besieged by nationalist forces headed by General Franco, who was backed by Nazi Germany and fascist Italy.

Though it had Spanish nationalist ideals as the central cause, the war was closely watched around the world mainly as the first major military contest between left-wing forces and the increasingly powerful and heavily armed fascists. The number of people killed in the war has been long disputed ranging between 500,000 and a million.

9 Sparta: The Sparta Praha club was founded on 16th November 1893. A memorial of the first very famous era of the club's history are first and foremost two victories in the Central European Cup, which in the 1920s and 1930s had the same significance as today's Champions League. Sparta, usually with Slavia, always formed the foundation of the national team and therefore its players were present during the greatest successes of the Czechoslovak and Czech teams.

10 Slavia: on 21st January 1896 at a general meeting of the Slavia Praha club a soccer union was formed. Slavia already played its first international match on 8th January 1899 against Berlin with a 0:0 result. Up to the start of WWI Slavia won the Charity Cup in the years 1906, 1920, 1911 and 1912. This very strong team won the Czechoslovak League in the years 1930, 1933, 1934 and the Central Bohemia District Cup in the years 1922, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1930 and 1932. Subsequently Slavia were league champions in 1935 and 1937 and won the Cup in the year 1935.

11 Masaryk, Tomas Garrigue (1850-1937): Czechoslovak political leader and philosopher and chief founder of the First Czechoslovak Republic. He founded the Czech People's Party in 1900, which strove for Czech independence within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, for the protection of

minorities and the unity of Czechs and Slovaks.

After the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in 1918, Masaryk became the first president of Czechoslovakia. He was reelected in 1920, 1927, and 1934. Among the first acts of his government was an extensive land reform. He steered a moderate course on such sensitive issues as the status of minorities, especially the Slovaks and Germans, and the relations between the church and the state. Masaryk resigned in 1935 and Edvard Benes, his former foreign minister, succeeded him.

12 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.

13 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.

14 Terezin Initiative: In the year 1991 the former prisoners of various concentration camps met and decided to found the Terezin Initiative (TI), whose goal is to commemorate the fate of Protectorate (Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia) Jews, to commemorate the dead and document the history of the Terezin ghetto. Within the framework of this mission TI performs informative, documentary, educational and editorial activities. It also financially supports field trips to the Terezin Ghetto Museum for Czech schools.

15 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.

16 Heydrichiade: Period of harsh reprisals against the Czech resistance movement and against the Czech nation under the German occupation (1939–45). It started in September 1941 with the appointment of R. Heydrich as Reichsprotektor of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, who declared martial law and executed the representatives of the local resistance.

The Heydrichiade came to its peak after Heydrich's assassination in May 1942. After his death, martial law was introduced until early July 1942, in the framework of which Czech patriots were executed and deported to concentration camps, and the towns of Lidice and Lezaky were annihilated. Sometimes the term Heydrichiade is used to refer to the period of martial law after Heydrich's assassination.

17 Martial law: The Nazis reacted to Heydrich's assassination with an immediate increase in terror, on 27th May 1942 martial law was immediately proclaimed for the entire territory of the Protectorate. Anyone who provided support for the perpetrators or only agreed with the assassination or wasn't registered as a permanent resident with the police was shot.

All exits out of Prague were immediately closed, and posts controlling all movement out of the city were set up. Immediately after the assassination a huge wave of arrests began, and executions were performed on a massive scale.

As a warning, the names of the executed were posted every day in the newspapers and on street corners. In the night of the 27th to the 28th of May, all of Prague was subjected to a mass search whose purpose was to find the perpetrators.

18 Lodz Ghetto: It was set up in February 1940 city in the former Jewish quarter on the northern outskirts of the city. 164,000 Jews from Lodz were packed together in a 4 sq. km. area. In 1941 and 1942, 38,500 more Jews were deported to the ghetto. In November 1941, 5,000 Roma were also deported to the ghetto from Burgenland province, Austria.

The Jewish self-government, led by Mordechai Rumkowsky, sought to make the ghetto as productive as possible and to put as many inmates to work as he could. But not even this could prevent overcrowding and hunger or improve the inhuman living conditions.

As a result of epidemics, shortages of fuel and food and insufficient sanitary conditions, about 43,500 people (21% of all the residents of the ghetto) died of undernourishment, cold and illness. The others were transported to death camps; only a very small number of them survived.

19 Vedem: The magazine Vedem was put out by boys from the 1st boys' home inTerezin (located in a former school designated L 417), which for practically all of its existence was led by the educator and teacher Valtr Eisinger, alias Prcek [Squirt]. He established the principle of self-government in the home, and named it after a Russian school for orphans, which was named 'Respublika Skid'.

Vedem began to be published as a cultural and news magazine. In the beginning it was available to all, thanks to it being conceived as a bulletin-board magazine. Subsequently for security reasons this approach was abandoned. After each publication the magazine was passed around, and its entire contents were discussed at the home's plenary meetings held every Friday.

Everyone who was interested could attend these meetings. Vedem was published weekly from December of 1942, and always as one single copy. The magazine's pages are numbered consecutively and together the entire magazine has 787 pages.

The authors of the absolute majority of the contributions were the boys themselves, who ranged from 13 to 15 years old. We can, however, also find in the magazine contributions by educators and teachers. Published in Vedem were stories, critical articles, articles inspired by specific events, educational articles, poems and drawings.

Mostly the boys describe in their works the situation in the camp, state their perceptions relating to life in Terezin, but also concern themselves with the problem of the Jewish question, Jewish history, and so on. Often-used literary devices are irony (especially in commenting the overall situation in the camp), satire (mainly in poems), metaphors, the use of contrasts.

Most articles are written anonymously, or under various nicknames. Some boys, supported by the efforts for collective education that ruled in Terezin, formed an authors' group and all used the pseudonym Akademie [Academy] for their articles. Part of the magazine Vedem was published in book form by M.R. Krizkova in collaboration with Zdenek Ornest and Jiri Kotouc under the name 'Are The Ghetto Walls My Homeland (Je moji vlasti hradba ghett).

20 Hirsch, Fredy (1916–1944): member of the Maccabi Association, a sports club founded in the middle of the 1920s as a branch of the Maccabi Sports Club, the first Jewish sports association on the territory of Bohemia and Moravia.

Hirsch organized the teaching of sports to youth at Prague's Hagibor, after his deportation to Terezin he continued in this activity there as well. After the reinstatements of transports to Auschwitz in 1943 and after the creation of the "family camp" there, Hirsch and other teachers organized a children's home there as well.

They continued to teach until the Nazis murdered virtually all the members of the "family camp", including children and teachers, in the gas chambers.

21 Gross-Rosen camp: The Gross-Rosen camp was set up in August 1940, as a branch of Sachsenhausen; the inmates were forced to work in the local granite quarry. The first transport arrived at Gross-Rosen on 2nd August 1940.

The initial labor camp acquired the status of an independent concentration camp on 1 May 1941. Gross-Rosen was significantly developed in 1944, the character of the camp also changed; numerous branches (approx. 100) were created alongside the Gross-Rosen headquarters, mostly in the area of Lower Silesia, the Sudeten Mountains and Ziemia Lubuska.

A total of approximately 125,000 inmates passed through Gross-Rosen (through the headquarters and the branches) including unregistered prisoners; some prisoners were brought to the camp only to be executed (e.g. 2,500 Soviet prisoners of war). Jews (citizens of different European countries), Poles and citizens of the former Soviet Union were among the most numerous ethnic groups in the camp. The death toll of Gross-Rosen is estimated at approximately 40,000.

22 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.

23 Klement Gottwald (1896 – 1953): the first Communist president of Czechoslovakia is born on the 23rd of October, 1896 in Dedice. In the 1920's, up until the year 1926, Klement Gottwald is a functionary of the Communist Party.

In February of 1929, during negotiations the V. Meeting of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSC), Klement Gottwald, along with Guttmann, Sverma, Slansky, Kopecky and Reiman get into the party leadership. In September and October of 1938 Klement Gottwald belongs to the main representatives of the opposition to the acceptance of the Munich Agreement.

After the KSC is banned Klement Gottwald emigrates in November of 1939, that is, after Czechoslovakia's occupation by Germany, to the Soviet Union. In December 1943 Klement Gottwald and E. Benes, the representative of the London emigrés come to an agreement on the unification of the internal and foreign anti-Nazi resistance movements.

When the Communists win the democratic elections in 1946, Klement Gottwald becomes the premier on July 2nd. On 14th June 1948, after the abdication of E. Benes, Klement Gottwald is elected to the post of Czechoslovak president.

During Gottwald's rule, many show trials take place at the beginning of the 1950's, political terror is unleashed – based on the law regarding the protection of the People's Democratic Republic No. 231/1948 Sb., over 230 death sentences are handed down, and over one hundred thousand citizens are sentenced to life or long years' imprisonment.

For five years, people are deported to forced labor camps with no trial. Tens of thousands of "anti-state elements" pass through correctional army PTP (Technical Assistance Battalion) units. Finally Gottwald even sent eleven of his closest highly-ranked Communist functionaries, led by R. Slansky, to the gallows. Klement Gottwald dies in 1953.

24 Trotsky, Lev Davidovich (born Bronshtein) (1879-1940): Russian revolutionary, one of the leaders of the October Revolution of 1917, an outstanding figure of the communist movement and a theorist of Marxism.

Trotsky participated in the social-democratic movement from 1894 and supported the idea of the unification of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks from 1906. In 1905 he developed the idea of the 'permanent revolution'. He was one of the leaders of the October Revolution and a founder of the Red Army. He widely applied repressive measures to support the discipline and 'bring everything into revolutionary order' at the front and the home front.

The intense struggle with Stalin for the leadership ended with Trotsky's defeat. In 1924 his views were declared petty-bourgeois deviation. In 1927 he was expelled from the Communist Party, and exiled to Kazakhstan, and in 1929 abroad. He lived in Turkey, Norway and then Mexico. He excoriated Stalin's regime as a bureaucratic degeneration of the proletarian power. He was murdered in Mexico by an agent of Soviet special services on Stalin’s order.

25 Tito, Josip Broz (1892-1980): President of communist Yugoslavia from 1953 until his death. He organized the Yugoslav Communist Party in 1937 and became the leader of the Yugoslav partisan movement after 1941. He liberated most of Yugoslavia with his partisans, including Belgrade, made territorial gains (Fiume and the previously Italian Istria).

In March 1945 he became the head of the new federal Yugoslav government. He nationalized industry but did not enforce the Soviet-style collective farming system. On the political plane, he oppressed and executed his political opposition.

Although Yugoslavia was closely associated with the USSR, Tito often pursued independent policies. He accepted western loans to stabilize national economy, and gradually relaxed many of the regime’s strict controls. As a result, Yugoslavia became the most liberal communist country in Europe. After Tito’s death in 1980 ethnic tensions resurfaced, bringing about the brutal breakup of the federal state in the 1990s.

26 Khrushchev, Nikita (1894-1971): Soviet communist leader. After Stalin’s death in 1953, he became first secretary of the Central Committee, in effect the head of the Communist Party of the USSR. In 1956, during the 20th Party Congress, Khrushchev took an unprecedented step and denounced Stalin and his methods. He was deposed as premier and party head in October 1964. In 1966 he was dropped from the Party's Central Committee.

27 Benes, Edvard (1884-1948): Czechoslovak politician and president from 1935-38 and 1946-48. He was a follower of T. G. Masaryk, the first president of Czechoslovakia, and the idea of Czechoslovakism, and later Masaryk’s right-hand man. After World War I he represented Czechoslovakia at the Paris Peace Conference.

He was Foreign Minister (1918-1935) and Prime Minister (1921-1922) of the new Czechoslovak state and became president after Masaryk retired in 1935. The Czechoslovak alliance with France and the creation of the Little Entente (Czechoslovak, Romanian and Yugoslav alliance against Hungarian revisionism and the restoration of the Habsburgs) were essentially his work.

After the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia by the Munich Pact (1938) he resigned and went into exile. Returning to Prague in 1945, he was confirmed in office and was reelected president in 1946. After the communist coup in February 1948 he resigned in June on the grounds of illness, refusing to sign the new constitution.

28 Samizdat literature in Czechoslovakia: Samizdat literature: The secret publication and distribution of government-banned literature in the former Soviet block. Typically, it was typewritten on thin paper (to facilitate the production of as many carbon copies as possible) and circulated by hand, initially to a group of trusted friends, who then made further typewritten copies and distributed them clandestinely.

Material circulated in this way included fiction, poetry, memoirs, historical works, political treatises, petitions, religious tracts, and journals. The penalty for those accused of being involved in samizdat activities varied according to the political climate, from harassment to detention or severe terms of imprisonment.

In Czechoslovakia, there was a boom in Samizdat literature after 1948 and, in particular, after 1968, with the establishment of a number of Samizdat editions supervised by writers, literary critics and publicists: Petlice (editor L. Vaculik), Expedice (editor J. Lopatka), as well as, among others, Ceska expedice (Czech Expedition), Popelnice (Garbage Can) and Prazska imaginace (Prague Imagination).

29 Prague Spring: A period of democratic reforms in Czechoslovakia, from January to August 1968. Reformatory politicians were secretly elected to leading functions of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSC). Josef Smrkovsky became president of the National Assembly, and Oldrich Cernik became the Prime Minister.

Connected with the reformist efforts was also an important figure on the Czechoslovak political scene, Alexander Dubcek, General Secretary of the KSC Central Committee (UV KSC). In April 1968 the UV KSC adopted the party's Action Program, which was meant to show the new path to socialism. It promised fundamental economic and political reforms.

On 21st March 1968, at a meeting of representatives of the USSR, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, East Germany and Czechoslovakia in Dresden, Germany, the Czechoslovaks were notified that the course of events in their country was not to the liking of the remaining conference participants, and that they should implement appropriate measures.

In July 1968 a meeting in Warsaw took place, where the reformist efforts in Czechoslovakia were designated as "counter-revolutionary." The invasion of the USSR and Warsaw Pact armed forces on the night of 20th August 1968, and the signing of the so-called Moscow Protocol ended the process of democratization, and the Normalization period began.

30 Svoboda, Ludvik (1895-1979): During World War II General Ludvik Svoboda commanded Czechoslovak troops under Soviet military leadership, which took part in liberating Eastern Slovakia.

After the war Svoboda became minister of defence (1945-1950) and then President of Czechoslovakia (1968-1975).

31 Dubcek, Alexander (1921-1992): Slovak and Czechoslovak politician and statesman, protagonist of the reform movement in the CSSR. In 1963 he became the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia. With his succession to this function began the period of the relaxation of the Communist regime.

In 1968 he assumed the function of General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and opened the way for the influence of reformist elements in the Communist party and in society, which had struggled for the implementation of a democratically pluralist system, for the resolution of economic, social and societal problems by methods suitable for the times and the needs of society. Intimately connected with his name are the events that in

the world received the name Prague Spring.

After the occupation of the republic by the armies of the USSR and the Warsaw Pact on 21st August 1968, he was arrested and dragged to the USSR. On the request of Czechoslovak representatives and under pressure from Czechoslovak and world public opinion, they invited him to the negotiations between Soviet and Czechoslovak representatives in Moscow. After long hesitation he also signed the so-called Moscow Protocol, which set the conditions and methods of the resolution of the situation, which basically however meant the beginning of the end of the Prague Spring.

32 Josef Smrkovsky (1911-1974): member of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia since 1933. During the German occupation, worked in the Communist resistance. In 1945 he was the deputy chairman of the Czech National Council and a leading political figure of the May Uprising in 1945. Criticized for his methods during the uprising by the Soviets as well as the leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. After the liberation is shortly the chairman of the Provincial National Committee in Bohemia (deposed on Soviet intervention).

1949-51 deputy of the Minister of Agriculture and General Director of State Farms. 1946-51 member of the National Assembly. Imprisoned 1951-55. In 1963 legally, socially and politically rehabilitated. One of the main representatives of the reformist forces in the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia during the second half of the 1960's.

On 21st August 1968 he stood up against the Soviet military intervention in Czechoslovakia, and together with other leading reformist politicians was dragged away to the USSR, on 23rd-26th August 1968 participated in negotiations in Moscow with the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Unions, and co-signed the so-called Moscow Protocol.

On 27th August 1968 he returned home and during subsequent months attempted to resist the ascension of pro-Soviet "normalization" forces. In the fall of 1969 stripped of all functions and in 1970 expelled from the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

33 Charter 77: A manifesto published under the title Charter 77 in January 1977 demanded the Czechoslovak government to live up to its own laws in regard to human, political, civic and cultural rights in Czechoslovakia. The document first appeared as a manifesto in a West German newspaper and was signed by more than 200 Czechoslovak citizens representing various occupations, political viewpoints, and religions.

By the mid-1980s it had been signed by 1,200 people. Within Czechoslovakia it was circulated in samizdat form. The government's retaliation against the signers included dismissal from work, denial of educational opportunities for their children, forced exile, loss of citizenship, detention, and imprisonment. The repression of the Charter 77 continued in the 1980s, but the dissidents refused to capitulate and continued to issue reports on the government's violations of human rights.

34 Radio Free Europe: Radio station launched in 1949 at the instigation of the US government with headquarters in West Germany. The radio broadcast uncensored news and features, produced by Central and Eastern European émigrés, from Munich to countries of the Soviet block. The radio station was jammed behind the Iron Curtain, team members were constantly harassed and several people were killed in terrorist attacks by the KGB.

Radio Free Europe played a role in supporting dissident groups, inner resistance and will of freedom in the Eastern and Central European communist countries and thus it contributed to the downfall of the totalitarian regimes of the Soviet block. The headquarters of the radio have been in Prague since 1994.

35 Velvet Revolution: Also known as November Events, this term is used for the period between 17th November and 29th December 1989, which resulted in the downfall of the Czechoslovak communist regime. A non-violent political revolution in Czechoslovakia that meant the transition from Communist dictatorship to democracy.

The Velvet Revolution began with a police attack against Prague students on 17th November 1989. That same month the citizen's democratic movement Civic Forum (OF) in Czech and Public Against Violence (VPN) in Slovakia were formed. On 10th December a government of National Reconciliation was established, which started to realize democratic reforms.

On 29th December Vaclav Havel was elected president. In June 1990 the first democratic elections since 1948 took place.

36 Events of 1989: In 1989 the communist regime in Poland finally collapsed and the process of forming a multiparty, pluralistic, democratic political system and introducing a capitalist economy began. Communist policy and the deepening economic crisis since the early 1980s had caused increasing social discontent and weariness and the radicalization of moods among Solidarity activists (Solidarity: a trade union that developed into a political party and played a key role in overthrowing communism).

On 13th December 1981 the PZPR had introduced martial law (lifted on 22nd June 1983). Growing economic difficulties, social moods and the strength of the opposition persuaded the national authorities to begin gradually liberalizing the political system. Changes in the USSR also influenced the policy of the PZPR. A series of strikes in April-May and August 1988, and demonstrations in many towns and cities forced the authorities to seek a compromise with the opposition.

After a few months of meetings and consultations the Round Table negotiations took place (6th Feb.-5th April 1989) with the participation of Solidarity activists (Lech Walesa) and the democratic opposition (Bronislaw Geremek, Jacek Kuron, Tadeusz Mazowiecki). The resolutions it passed signaled the end of the PZPR's monopoly on power and cleared the way for the overthrow of the system.

In parliamentary elections (4th June 1989) the PZPR and its subordinate political groups suffered defeat. In fall 1989 a program of fundamental economic, social and ownership transformations was drawn up and in January 1990 the PZPR dissolved.

37 Macha, Karel Hynek (1810–1836): representative of High Romanticism, whose poetry, prose and drama express important questions of human existence. Reflections on Judaism (and human emancipation as a whole) play an important role in his work. Macha belonged to the intellectual avant-garde of the Czech national society. He studied law.

Macha died suddenly of weakening of the organism and of cholera on 6th November 1836. Macha's works (Krivoklad, 1834) refer to a certain contemporary and social vagueness in Jewish material –

Jews are seen romantically and sentimentally as beings exceptional, tragically ostracized, and internally beautiful. They are subjects of admiration as well as condolence.

38 Husak, Gustav (1913–1991): entered into politics already in the 1930s as a member of the Communist Party. Drew attention to himself in 1944, during preparations for and course of the Slovak National Uprising. After the war he filled numerous party positions, but of special importance was his chairmanship of the Executive Committee during the years 1946 to 1950. His activities in this area were aimed against the Democratic Party, the most influential force in Slovakia.

In 1951 he was arrested, convicted of bourgeois nationalism and in April 1954 sentenced to life imprisonment. Long years of imprisonment, during which he acted courageously and which didn't end until 1960, neither broke Husak's belief in Communism, nor his desire to excel. He used the relaxing of conditions at the beginning of 1968 for a vigorous return to political life. Because he had gained great confidence and support in Slovakia, on the wishes of Moscow he replaced Alexander Dubcek in the function of First Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party.

More and more he gave way to Soviet pressure and approved mass purges in the Communist Party. When he was elected president on 29th May 1975, the situation in the country was seemingly calm. The Communist Party leaders were under the impression that given material sufficiency, people will reconcile themselves with a lack of political and intellectual freedom and a worsening environment.

In the second half of the 1980s social crises deepened, multiplied by developments in the Soviet Union. Husak had likely imagined the end of his political career differently. In December 1987 he resigned from his position as General Secretary of the Communist Party, and on 10th December 1989 as a result of the revolutionary events also abdicated from the presidency.

Symbolically, this happened on Human Rights Day, and immediately after he was forced to appoint a government of 'national reconciliation.' The foundering of his political career quickened his physical end. Right before his death he reconciled himself with the Catholic Church. He died on 18th February 1991 in Bratislava.

39 Milos Jakes (born 1922): Czech Communist politician, in the 1970's one of the leading representatives of the so-called normalization in Czechoslovakia and in during the years 1987-89 the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSC).

In 1977 Jakes becomes a member of the KSC Central Committee, from 1981 he is then a member of the presidium – in is function he is responsible for overseeing Party work in agriculture, from June of 1981 then assumes responsibility for the entire sphere of economics in Czechoslovakia.

From the second half of the 1980's Jakes acts as an ally of the reforms of M. Gorbachev in the Soviet Union, attempts to implement (partially and unsystematically) similar reforms in Czechoslovakia. In 1987 Jakes replaces G. Husak in the function of General Secretary of the Central Committee of the KSC, his attempts at half-baked reforms while preserving the KSC's political monopoly however end in 1989 with an absolute fiasco – after the November events in 1989 the leading role of the KSC in Czechoslovakia ends, Jakes himself is forced to leave the head of the party (November 24th) and in December of that same year (December 5th) he expelled from the

party at a special congress of the KSC.

Still in December of 1989 Jakes gives up his mandate as a member of the National Assembly (having been an assemblyman since 1971) and leaves politics. In the 1990's he is charged several times for his role during the August events of 1968, however he is never sentenced. Today Milos Jakes lives in seclusion.

40 Havel, Vaclav (1936-): Czech dramatist, poet and politician. Havel was an active figure in the liberalization movement leading to the Prague Spring, and after the Soviet-led intervention in 1968 he became a spokesman of the civil right movement called Charter 77.

He was arrested for political reasons in 1977 and 1979. He became President of the Czech and Slovak Republic in 1989 and was President of the Czech Republic after the secession of Slovakia until January 2003.

41 Six-Day-War: (Hebrew: Milhemet Sheshet Hayamim), also known as the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, Six Days' War, or June War, was fought between Israel and its Arab neighbors Egypt, Jordan, and Syria.

It began when Israel launched a preemptive war on its Arab neighbors; by its end Israel controlled the Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights. The results of the war affect the geopolitics of the region to this day.

42 Yad Vashem: This museum, founded in 1953 in Jerusalem, honors both Holocaust martyrs and 'the Righteous Among the Nations', non-Jewish rescuers who have been recognized for their 'compassion, courage and morality'.