

*Elena Makarova*

## **TEREZÍN ARTIST ERICH LICHTBLAU-LESKLY**

I drew what was closest to the truth.  
How did I feel about it? Tragicomical.  
A person living at such a time  
doesn't think about the times he's living in,  
doesn't **understand it**. ...  
All the pictures I drew were for myself.  
To prove that this actually happened.  
*Erich Leskly*<sup>1</sup>

### **Foreword**

The story of the cartoons done by Erich (Eli) Leskly (till 1945 – Erich Lichtblau) at Theresienstadt is in itself a story worth telling. During nearly three years of imprisonment (1942 – 1945), the author, who had been employed as a window dresser in Ostrava, managed to create a satirical chronicle of life in the ghetto.

The skills Leskly acquired at the Hamburg design school enriched his natural talent. He had not studied drawing until aged 19. The family could hardly afford it. His father, Joseph Lichtblau, a tailor, died young, leaving a widow with three children. Erich was then eleven. Sidonie Lichtblau scarcely made ends meet; later the care of family became the responsibility of her second husband.

In Erich **Leskly's interview (1965)**,<sup>2</sup> poverty is the dominant theme. As a boy he dreamed of taking part in the Maccabiah games in Eretz Israel and remain there for good, but there was no money for the trip. In 1939, he wanted to leave on the last ship to Palestine but was short of five thousand crowns. Scarcity leads to dreams of plenty. **Isn't this why the display-windows Leskly designed reflect such plenty?**

Display-windows are, after all, a kind of **"theatre of everyday life" where ties, suits and electric kettles play the parts**. In this "theatre" superfluity is in no way a negative quality; rather, it is a function of style. The baroque and rococo – in comparison with the gothic style – are superfluous, they glorify life by their polyphonic variety, they admire its abundance and many-sidedness. Similarly, our Leskly admired the abundance of necessary and important things which he had to compose into an attractive display for shoppers.

He clung to the cult of "things", in the good sense of the word, for the rest of his life. Things are memory, spiritual and material. A small collapsible stool from **Terezín** left to Elsa, the **artist's widow**, by her uncle who was transported to Auschwitz; a miniature saucepan manufactured by Norm for warming up meals – such as they were; a hand-made bracelet

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<sup>1</sup> Erich Leskly's words from documentary film "Miever le dmujot" (Over Tears) by Hedwa Galili Smolinski, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Here and further his quotes are from: audio-interview with Erich Leskly (by Meir Lamed), typewritten record 20.1.1965 (Reviewed by E. Leskly 10.7.1965).

fashioned out of silver spoons on which Erich had marked the main milestones of the eight years of his life with Elsa – somehow they hung onto these things throughout their imprisonment, and took them with them when they left the camp.

In Israel, Erich Leskly continued working as a window dresser. He also liked to draw – exotic women, exotic landscapes, sometimes from postcards but more often from nature; portraits of his wife, children and grandsons, pet animals – drawings of all he held dear and loved, though hardly "art" in the usual sense of the word.

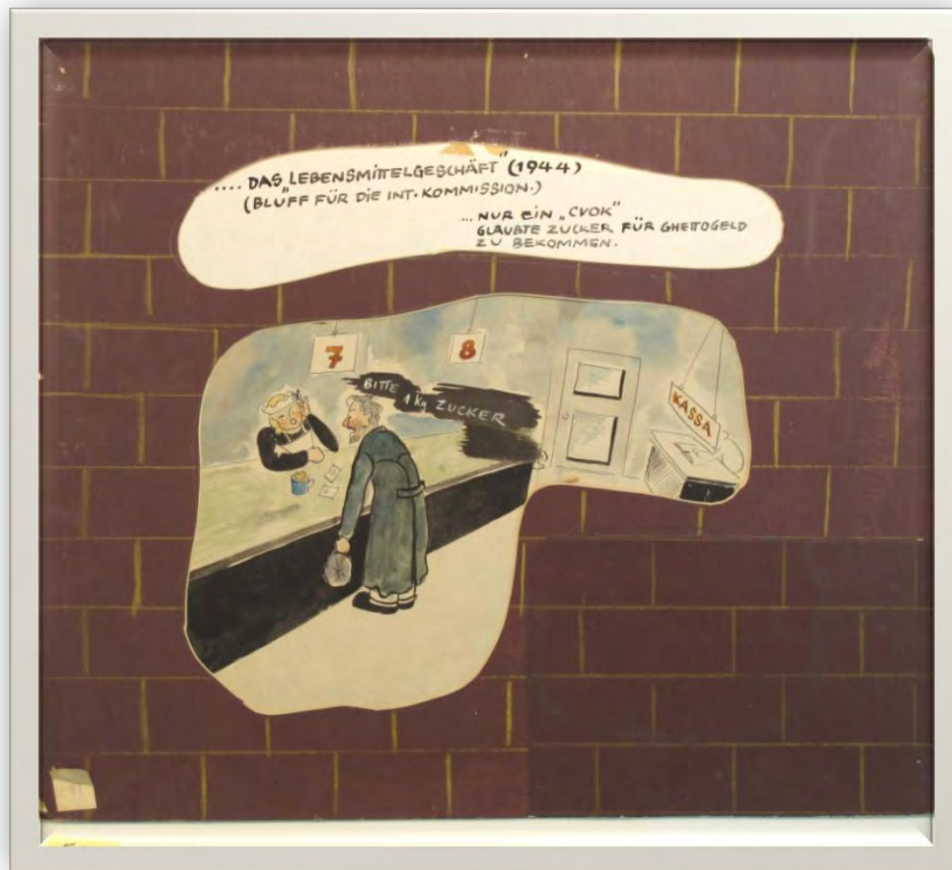
It was **Terezín** that turned Leskly into a genuine artist. This is probably why, in his later years, Leskly decided to restore the pictures which, at the end of the war, he had very **nearly destroyed**. "I've made the pictures into **puzzles**," he says. "I didn't know what to do with the texts so I just got rid of them, but they're still in my head."

But how do you make a single entity out of little scraps of a delicate watercolor painting? Leskly found a way: he drew it all over again. Monochrome works with splotches of yellow that come out rather like posters – bright drawing, with fonts meticulously selected. The artist had awakened once more.

"When I gathered the pictures together I had a thought: if placed in niches of a big brick wall, **they'd look like a fresco**."



A Jew. Incarcerated in ghetto



The "food store" (1944) (bluff for International Red Cross Commission) ... only one "cvok" (fool) believed that he could receive sugar for ghetto money; Please, 1 kg of sugar

## Part 1. Austro-Hungary, Czechoslovakia, the Protectorate

### 1. Grandfather's house and the German school in Hrušov

Erich Lichtblau was born on June 6, 1911 in the small town of Hrušov, five kilometers from the Moravian city of Ostrava. His childhood years coincided with the First World War; when it ended in 1918, he was seven. In the same year, the First Republic of Czechoslovakia was proclaimed.

On pre-war postcards we see a cozy small town – the river, greenery, small, but sturdy houses. Factory chimneys rise on the horizon. Ostrava and its vicinity was a coal-mining region from time immemorial.

The family possessed two little houses. One of them contained a workshop where Samuel Storch, Erich's grandfather, carved at leisure small things for the household. Being a travelling salesman, Samuel Storch travelled far and wide, bringing to villages cloth for for bridal dresses. Without grandfather, life in the house got boring, and Erich would impatiently wait for his return. As soon as old Samuel reappeared, the workshop would reopen and Erich could once again savor his favorite smell of wood shavings. Erich brought his grandfather rough pieces of wood, which Samuel trimmed, planed and made smooth. The boy helped

Samuel to grind handles and to fit furniture parts together. Like his grandfather, Erich too had clever hands.

In the small Jewish community of Hrušov, **Samuel Storch was a respected** figure. He was not an orthodox Jew but he brought up Erich in the spirit of Judaism, taking him to the synagogue, telling him about Palestine. He enrolled Erich in the **Hrušov German school**. To understand such a choice requires a certain knowledge of history. Czech Silesia had been part of Silesia which had passed to Austria in the end of the First Silesian War – the War of the Austrian Succession (1742). In 1918 the former duchy became a part of the Sudeten province of Austria which, in turn, passed to Czechoslovakia under the 1919 Saint-Germain peace treaty. German was the prevailing language in this region.

Samuel Storch, born in 1860, had been a citizen of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy for over half a century. **"Only G-d knows about this Czechoslovakia," he probably reflected. "Who knows how long it'll last and how it will treat Jews? Let Erich be registered as a German and attend a German school. For now, Jews are respected both by Czechs and Germans and later – we'll see."**

In 1938, the Sudeten area passed to Germany. In 1939, the Germans seized Czechoslovakia (March) and Poland (September). In 1942, Samuel Storch, aged eighty two, was deported to **Terezín** and two months later from there to Treblinka.

## **2. Ostrava, Zionism and Masaryk**

According to school records, Erich was a good student. His friends were Jewish children from the Maccabi sports club and the Tchelet Lavan (Blue-White) youth movement. Jewish scouts went hiking, learned Hebrew songs --- without knowing Hebrew -- and dreamed of Palestine. In Ostrava, then a bulwark of Zionism where Jewish aspirations were clearly Hechalutz<sup>3</sup> and Return to the Land, children's dreams could become reality. But before going to Palestine one had to learn a trade that would be of use there. Erich chose electrical engineering. He went to study with Mr. Spitzer, an engineer. Spitzer, who also owned an electrical appliance **shop, told the young man: "You're from a good Jewish family – why not go into business?"** and there and then offered him a job in his shop. Erich, however, showed no gift for business; moreover, the three years he spent in the shop put him off business forever. Window dressing **at Jakob Schanzer's fashion** shop was another matter altogether. **How much time Erich spent at Schanzer's and how often he changed the** window display is not known, but this may be considered a defining point in his life. Thus appeared a new dream: to study design. Not exactly what Eretz Yisrael would have expected -- but then again, there was no hurry to get there.

In those years, anti-Semitism was rare in Czechoslovakia. Most of the credit for this belonged to the first president of Czechoslovakia, **Tomáš G. Masaryk**, who conceived of anti-Semitism and Christianity as being totally incompatible. From the early 1920s, he had begun

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<sup>3</sup> Hechalutz (The Pioneer, *Heb.*) was a Zionist movement begun in Eastern Europe to promote agricultural settlement in Palestine. The movement operated training farms where young people could learn the elements of practical farming. At its peak between 1930-1935 the movement counted 100,000.

to sympathize with Zionism as a movement for the spiritual and moral revival of Jewish people. He was the first head of state to visit Palestine under the British mandate, in 1927. In those years being a Zionist and remaining in Europe was normal. It was more difficult to define the position inside the Zionist movement itself which had broken up into various factions.

"I was not in the Tchelet Lavan, I was in the Maccabi, with the ski section, with the gymnastics... Yes, when I was there, a Hachshara<sup>4</sup> group was formed, as I remember, from the Hechalutz - the Kedma. There was a Hachshara group in Partschendorf. Even though we were not organized in the Hechalutz, we were always in contact. I visited them, often went to Partschendorf, I was drawn to them.... Generally, in the Hechalutz there was a strong left-wing current – and therefore many people dropped out. This was in 1928 or 1929 – they became either social democrats or communists and moved away from the thing completely. Many naturally made aliya..."<sup>5</sup>

In 1929, during the Maccabi World Congress Ostrava, it was decided to hold a Jewish "Olympic Games" – i.e. Maccabiah -- in Tel Aviv. Meir Dizengof, then mayor of Tel Aviv, undertook to construct the first stadium in the country. In 1932 the first Maccabiah opened, with Jewish sportsmen from 23 countries participating.

As a Maccabi member of long-standing Erich wanted to attend the event, but his mother and stepfather refused to give their consent. A cousin of **Erich's** who left for Palestine in 1930, had thereupon been disowned by the family.

"It had such an effect on me -- I could never get over it. I wanted to follow him but had neither the funds nor the **resolution.**"

### **3. The Hamburg school, army and work**

In 1930 Erich Lichtblau enrolled at the Hamburg School for Applied Arts where he studied shop window display design. The photo suggests that only men were accepted for the course. Why in the Age of Emancipation no women were admitted to study applied arts is hard to guess. In this and other group pictures, Erich marked himself with an X, although one could hardly miss him, with his obviously Jewish features. This is especially conspicuous in the pictures taken with his army comrades. From 1932 to 1934 Erich served in Czechoslovak army infantry, where he would no doubt have learned of Hitler's rise to power. How did he take it? Most likely as an unfortunate event, but not affecting him personally. Having served loyally in the Czechoslovak army, in 1937-1938 he did reserve duty. According to Elsa,<sup>6</sup> Erich was a quiet man. He was always busy: designing, drawing, building - all in silence. He was at peace with the world and tried to avoid conflicts, especially at home. His friends at school and in the army respected him. He didn't like to talk but was neither gloomy nor unsociable, he smiled often.

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<sup>4</sup> Hachshara (Preparation, *Heb.*) was a Zionist movement for the preparation of emigration to Palestine. Hachshara groups were set up by Hechalutz throughout Germany and in the neighboring countries.

<sup>5</sup> Aliya (ascent – *Heb.*) is immigration of Jews to the Land of Israel.

<sup>6</sup> Here and further her quotes are from: video-interview with Elsa Leskly and Mira Leskly-Oren (by E.Makarova and H.Kuchuk), April 2010.

After the army Erich worked at Adolf Rix's department store in the center of Ostrava. This building, tall for those times, was built in 1928 in the constructivist style. The decorative building with its elegant shops, and, of course, big display-windows – could one dream of anything better? "The Heart of the Bride," "The White Week," advertising wedding accessories, long-legged storks carrying babies –grandfather Samuel Storch ("**stork**" in English) would have been justly proud of his grandson. Pictures of maidens with frozen smiles offered buyers a broad range of goods, a large female face, resembling Marlene Dietrich, dominated a display-window with cosmetic products.<sup>7</sup> From 1937 to 1939 Erich designed display-windows at the Julius Huppert<sup>8</sup> department store, opposite **Rix's**.

#### 4. Marriage

In February 1935, Erich met his future wife Elsa Silbiger. It was at a dance party at the National house. Elsa had come from her hometown Inwald in Polish Silesia to visit her relatives in Ostrava, and they had invited her to the party. For Erich it was love at first sight. Elsa liked his looks and almost everything about him – except his moustache. Next day, without a word, he shaved it off.

On May 30, 1937, in a synagogue in the Polish city of **Andrychów**, Rabbi Avigdor married the young couple and wished them a long and happy life. How destiny dealt with Rabbi Avigdor we do not know, but the couple he blessed that day celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in 1997, surrounded by a big happy family. According to Elsa, "Erich danced till he was 90."

#### 5. The Protectorate

On March 15, 1939, the German army marched into Prague. The previous evening, March 14<sup>th</sup>, Erich, Elsa, **Erich's** two brothers and his sister with her husband set out for Poland where Elsa's **parents lived**. They were stopped on the way by a Polish policeman who demanded their documents and brought them to the police station. The border between Czechoslovakia and Poland had been closed at 6 in the morning, and now the fugitives were in danger of being handed over to the Germans. Elsa persuaded the Polish policemen to allow them to return.

The border was guarded closely, but **Erich's brothers managed to cross it, reach Katowice**, then Posen, and eventually England. Elsa, Erich and his sister no longer dared to risk crossing the wooded border where, it was known, Jews could be set upon, robbed and killed. On June 21, 1939, the Nuremberg race laws went into effect throughout the Nazi-created Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. In Ostrava, SS-men were committing outrages against Jews.

The couple decided to flee to Prague. There were many more Jews there, a larger community, and if the "Jewish newspaper"<sup>9</sup> was to be believed, it would be easy to leave

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<sup>7</sup> The building was destroyed in 1944 during a bombardment. The store owner Adolf Rix and his wife Freda died in Auschwitz.

<sup>8</sup> Julius Huppert in 1939 left for Prague, from where in October 1942 he was deported to ghetto Lodz and then to Auschwitz

<sup>9</sup> Jewish Newspaper or Jüdisches Nachrichtenblatt. Its first issue in German and Czech appeared on November 24, 1939. As the

from there for abroad. In addition to the possibility of going to Palestine, the paper claimed, Jews could also find a haven in Bolivia or San Domingo, Panama or Argentina; it shows a map of the Dominican Republic. Under a picture of a compass rose pointing to New York, Shanghai, Buenos Aires, San Paolo and Tel Aviv, is the caption: **"Today this is a Jewish symbol."**

The newspaper is amply illustrated with photos of attractive places in the world, especially, of course, Palestine with its profusion of kibbutzim and proud Jewish pioneers carrying pitchforks on their shoulders.

At least half the newspaper is devoted to Zionist propaganda. **"To the future with Hechalutz," "Hebrew is our native language," "With a sound body to our new homeland," "Seeking Jewish donors,"** etc.

And this despite the fact that legal Jewish emigration from the Protectorate had been cut down drastically, and the long-awaited illegal transport to Palestine – barely able to accommodate 1000 emigrants, out of 90,000 applicants for emigration -- had left Prague in November 1939.<sup>10</sup>

## 6. Dobešice

While Erich was trying to arrange things in Prague, Elsa dealt with the Ostrava apartment. She arrived in Prague with two suitcases on September 1, 1939, the day the Germans invaded Poland. She and Erich failed to **get on the "Palestinian transport."** They now had to think what to do next.

"... I stayed in Prague, and from there we were sent, with the Hechalutz Hachshara-group, to an agricultural job organized by the Jewish labor office... They also sent other people since Jews could not be employed anywhere. I had already worked in construction before, while I was in Prague with Hechalutz.... I had found work with a German building contractor who had a Jewish wife. But he had employed me only until the 1st of January, 1940... It was hard work. And after January first, this Hachshara group was formed... My wife and I got to **Dobešice not far from Písek, together with** another 25 people.

„... This work group came to existence in the following way: after the Slovak state was founded, no more Slovak workers came – and the authorities had the idea to employ Jews.

„... **We were a commune. We had no private money, everything was bought communally;** we lived like in a real kvutza<sup>11</sup>. Later we had an allowance. It was a genuine kibbutz life – so it happened. We spent two seasons there.

„**We all were purely Zionist oriented, and we had people who were real Zionists,** no-one else could get in.

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press organ of the Jewish Community and the Prague Zionist Organization, this bilingual paper was now under the auspices of the Central Office for Jewish Emigration that had been founded by high-ranking Nazis including Adolf Eichmann.

At the time of the proclamation of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia 118,310 Jews were living in this territory. According to historians' estimations, legally or illegally, about 30 thousand persons, i.e. about every fourth of those subject to the Nuremberg Laws, left the territory of the Protectorate. (old.hrad.cz/kpr/holocaust/hist\_zid\_uk.html). Among illegal –escape transports” from Protectorate to Palestine, the largest one, later called the *Mauritius Aliya*,<sup>11</sup> started from Prague November 30, 1939. This risky enterprise is described e.g. in E.Makarova's book *Boarding Pass to Paradise*, 2005 (Hebrew edition: כרטיס העלייה לגן עדן, 2006).

<sup>11</sup> Kvutza (group, *Heb.*). Here refers to a close group of Zionists, cf. kibbutz.

„We had a Hebrew teacher. Some people there were orthodox but that didn't matter ... We knew we were all in a wretched situation, and all other things were less important. Nevertheless, there were endless discussions. We had them on Shabbat – we celebrated Shabbat as today in Israel. We sang songs, learned Ivrit, prepared for the Aliyah. It was very nice.“

Meanwhile, in September 1941, transports from Prague to Lodz had begun. Prague residents had to leave Dobešice for Prague – they were ordered to register where they resided. They never returned. Erich and Elsa were lucky: when they left Prague they had registered in Písek, at the apartment of one Kohn. Before their deportation to Terezín, Erich was in a group of Jewish lumberjacks who cut down trees, the only job available.

## Part 2. Terezín-Theresienstadt

### 1. Ghettoization

On November 26, 1942, the Lichtblau couple arrived in Terezín. Erich was lodged in the Hannover barracks, Elsa nearby, in the Hamburg barracks.

Terezín,<sup>12</sup> a fortress town with about 7,000 peacetime residents, was overflowing with prisoners. By November 1942, the population of the ghetto was over 50,000 in an area of 115,000 sq. meters, while the death rate (mainly through enteritis and pneumonia caused by starvation and cold) was about 127 a day.



Ghettoized: Posters from the Theresienstadt ghetto

<sup>12</sup> Terezín, in German Theresienstadt, was built 1780 as a fortress town by Emperor Joseph II of Austria and named after his mother, Empress Maria Theresa (a notorious anti-Semite).



The "ghettoization" of Terezín had started just a year before the Lesklys' arrival. On November 24th, 1941, members of the AK-1 construction team had been sent there from Prague. They were the first to see the huge derelict barracks with galleries and thick walls retaining moisture and bitter winter frost.

Nothing had yet been done to receive tens of thousands of prisoners. Young Czech Jews had the job of building bunk beds, converting stables to rooms, setting up medical facilities.

Despite the harsh conditions, the Terezin inmates staged cabaret shows and even repaired a broken down grand piano for Gideon Klein<sup>13</sup> to play Bach in candlelight.

Prof. Emil Utitz<sup>14</sup> wrote in his post-war essay *Psychology of Life in Terezín Concentration Camp*: "If somebody had told me on my first day in Terezín that I would spend three years there, I'd never have believed it. But I somehow got used to it, adapted to the **situation**. ... Those who could apply themselves to any useful activity handled hunger and cold more easily."<sup>15</sup>

**Adolf Eichman once called Terezín "a small Zionist experiment for the future Jewish state."**

To carry out **the experiment in the town ostensibly presented to the Jews by the Führer** himself, the Jewish self-administration was established. The Council of Elders and, above all, its head,<sup>16</sup> were appointed by the SS-commandant's office. The self-administration operated a peculiar system of justice (court and prison), a fake bank and post-office, a public nutrition system (dining rooms and kitchens) and medical services (hospitals, out-patient clinics and isolation wards). A kind of ministry of culture and sports named 'Free Time Administration'<sup>17</sup> arranged a broad range of events, from opera performances to football matches.

All these institutions, led by the Council of Elders, were subordinate to Germans: nothing could take place without approval by the commandant's office. As in other Nazi concentration camps, the SS-commandant held dominion **over the inmates' lives and destiny**. On January 10, 1942, nine young prisoners were publicly hanged just for passing unauthorized letters to the outside world.

## 2. Transports

Terezín was presented **to the world as a "humane solution to the Jewish question."** In fact, the fortress was a thriving transit point to extermination for all its detainees. Out of over 140,000 Jews brought to Terezín by 648 transports from the "Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia," Germany, Austria, Holland and Denmark, 88,135 were shipped in 65 transports to Auschwitz and other death camps, and 33,500 died while still in Terezín.

Whereas Elsa and Erich had had to walk with their heavy luggage **from Bohušovice railway**

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<sup>13</sup> Gideon Klein (1919 – 1945), pianist and composer, organizer of cultural life in Terezín.

<sup>14</sup> Emil Utitz (1883 – 1956), philosopher, art historian. Classmate and biographer of Franz Kafka. Corresponding member of the German Academy of Science. In Terezín, Head of Central Library, active lecturer, in charge of general lectures held in ghetto.

<sup>15</sup> E. Utitz, "Psychologie života v terezínském koncentračním táboře", Praha, 1947, s. 53.

<sup>16</sup> The Council of the Elders (Ältestenrat) was headed in turn by: a prominent Zionist Jacob Edelstein (1907-1944) (December 1941 - November 1943); Doctor of Sociology Paul Epstein (1901 - 1944) (November 1943 - September 1944), and finally, Rabbi Dr. Benjamin Marmorstein (1905-1989) (September 1944 - May 1945).

<sup>17</sup> Free Time Administration (*Ger.*, Freizeitgestaltung, FZG).

station, the subsequent arrivals were “luckier.” On June 1, 1943, the 2.5 km Bohušovice-Terezín spur track was solemnly opened by the SS commandatur. The builders, mainly young Zionists, were exempted from transports eastwards, but only while construction was in progress. Later most of them were deported.

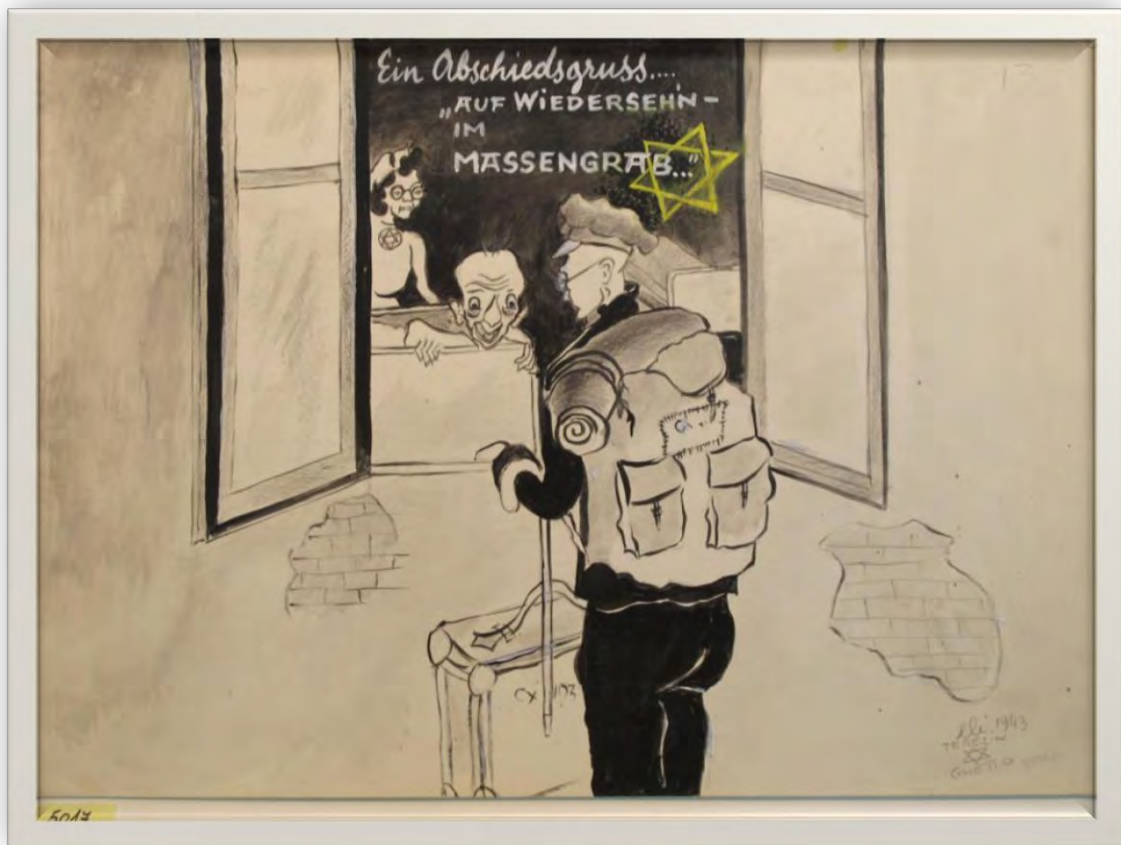


Railroad building

“Our camp was designed for death but was well organized for life,” reflected Joseph Manuel, a former Terezín prisoner. “You might say that the Jews made everything with their hands. But let’s look at it differently – a man is nothing without his head. And the head was Fascist. It had invented everything and we, the body, acted. I don’t want to belittle Edelstein’s talents and efforts in any way, but Terezín was not his invention. The Nazis were ‘solving the Jewish question.’ The Jews were given a subordinate task – to survive. The body had to adapt and to act to avoid destruction or self-destruction. This is the whole absurdity. The head thinks about how to kill the body, and the body does not yield. Up to a certain point, of course...”<sup>18</sup>

Until the summer of 1944, practically no information reached Terezín inmates about what went on “in the East”; but horror at the prospect of ending up on a deportation list hounded prisoners day and night. Notices with new transport numbers were distributed one week prior to deportation. There was also a reserve list to replace anyone crossed off at the last minute.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted from: E.Makarova, S. Makarov, V. Kuperman. *University Over the Abyss. The Story behind 520 Lecturers and 2430 Lectures in KZ Theresienstadt, 1942 — 1944*, Verba Publishers, Jerusalem, 2004, p. 382 [UOA]



A farewell before transport: –See you again in the mass grave.”

*Leskly's comment:* –Here is a farewell before a transport to the East... A man said: –See you in a mass grave,” but then it was only a joke... Nobody could believe it then, not just yet...”

“All the time there were transports,” Elsa Leskly recalled. “Someone from Ostrava had been pulled out, and my husband was taken from the reserve list and put in his place. I saw him off as if he was going to the cemetery.<sup>19</sup> I thought I’d see him no more. In the event he stayed behind. Someone was sent in his stead. Another time we received a notice for both of us. We sat with all our odds and ends; my husband’s soul was restless, he kept putting things together, then spreading them out again. I told him, leave it all alone, but he couldn’t calm down, he was scared. I told him, we are young, we are able to work and we shall work. Our line won’t end with us...”

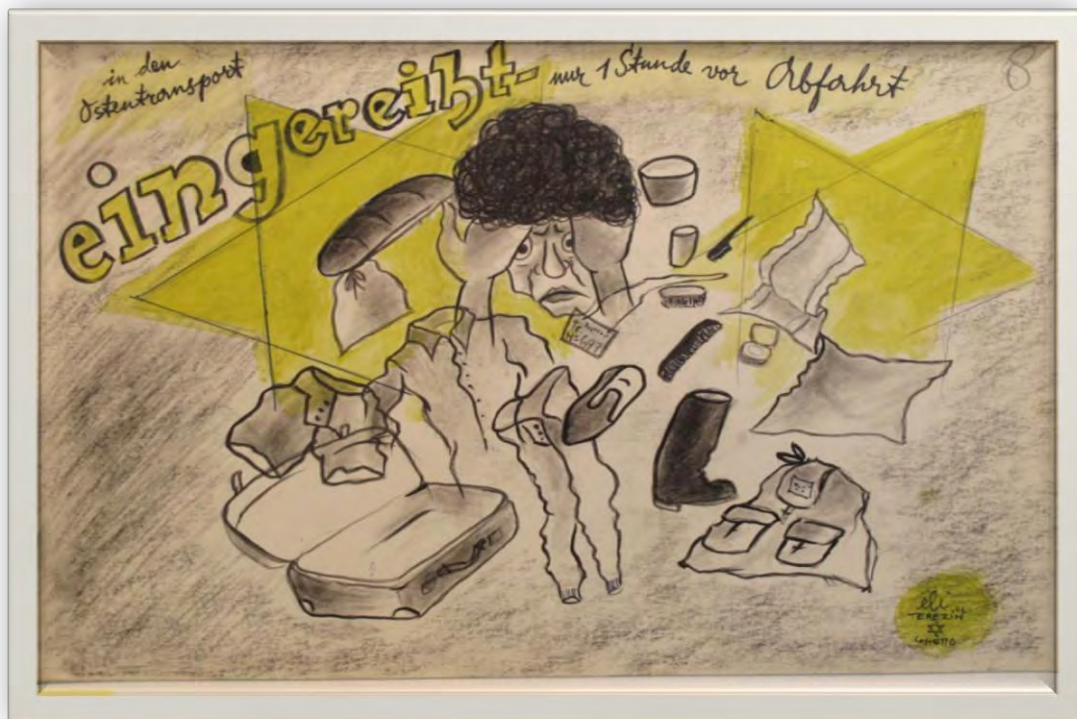
“Who finally interceded for us, I don’t know. However, what happened was that we sat all night, the train was waiting, numbers were announced, people rose and left, and we kept sitting. So it was till morning. We and several more listed people stayed in Terezín – an unbelievable miracle.”<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Transport Cu 1459.

<sup>20</sup> Video-interview with Elsa Leskly, May 2010.



Grandma's hand luggage for the journey to the East. [On the arm-band:] Transport Aid Service



Put on eastbound transport – only one hour before leaving

### 3. "Sanatorium for elderly Jewish veterans"

Theresienstadt was advertised as a "privileged Jewish settlement," or even a "sanatorium for elderly Jewish veterans." In fact this "sanatorium" became a mass grave for thousands of them.

Elderly people got lost in the "Jewish settlement" not only mentally, but physically. A special 'Orientation Service' was introduced. Its head, 70-years-old Philipp Manes from Berlin, recorded in his diary:

"The first hours passed calmly — we told each other about our experiences during the last months. Around half past ten the door opened, and the ghetto-watchman ushered in two crying, trembling old ladies: they had lost their way. The first thing was to calm the poor things down so we could ask them something. 'We went for a walk and then wanted back home but didn't find it. The streets look exactly the same — we have been looking long — we're tired — can't go on. Our dear ones will be worried that we are not coming.' And the tears flowed. ... They didn't have their papers with them, hadn't written down the house name. Well, what could we do but turn to the information office? There we easily got the necessary data."<sup>21</sup>

### 4. Overpopulation

Congestion and overpopulation are the subjects of many Terezín artists. The streets were also congested because Jews were allowed to walk only on certain routes.

An inmate **Arnošt Klein** writes in his diary: "...A daily morning walk around the ghetto (the short way through the area is impossible because other people are walking there), along the streets crammed with people going to work, along low windows from which the three-tier bunk beds could be seen rising right up to the ceiling. Sick old men lay on them. It was the same thing in all the blocks along the Hauptstrasse, Seegasse, etc."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> UOA, p. 91. Philipp Manes (1875 - 1944), journalist and entrepreneur from Berlin; in Terezín organized German-language lecturing society and drama circle.

<sup>22</sup> Arnošt Klein (1898 – 1944), artist, inventor, linguist. Deported to Auschwitz 28.9.1944. His diary: A.Klein, Deník, Památník Terezín, 841/69.



Everybody steals. [On the arm-bands:] KRI-PO (Criminal Police); WI-PO (Economic Police); KÜ-WA (Kitchen Guard); Zelenka (Detective Investigation Group)



The female field worker —schleusst—the forbidden „green—into the ghetto



Father was stealing, son was stealing



Stealing [-šlojs" in Czech slang] planks for a -kumbal"

Erich Lichtblau treated this subject differently. Dreaming of an empty corner, a moment of solitude, the inmates take unsafe actions: they steal building materials and use them to build plywood boxes, the "kumbáls,"<sup>23</sup> where one can spend time with one's wife or a girlfriend. But if illegal construction is discovered, the guilty party will end up on a transport list.



Night with her alone in the Bar Palanda



Everyone's dream: privacy in his/her own kumbál." [Sign at the right corner:] Yes, a kumbálist is better off

<sup>23</sup> Kumbál (Terezín slang) – a do-it-yourself box; place for appointments.



## 5. Lines, lines, endless lines

Lines for meals, lines to see the doctor, lines for the lavatory – prisoners spent half their time standing in lines. According to data from November 1942, there was one lavatory per 80 prisoners. In the attics, there were no lavatories at all.

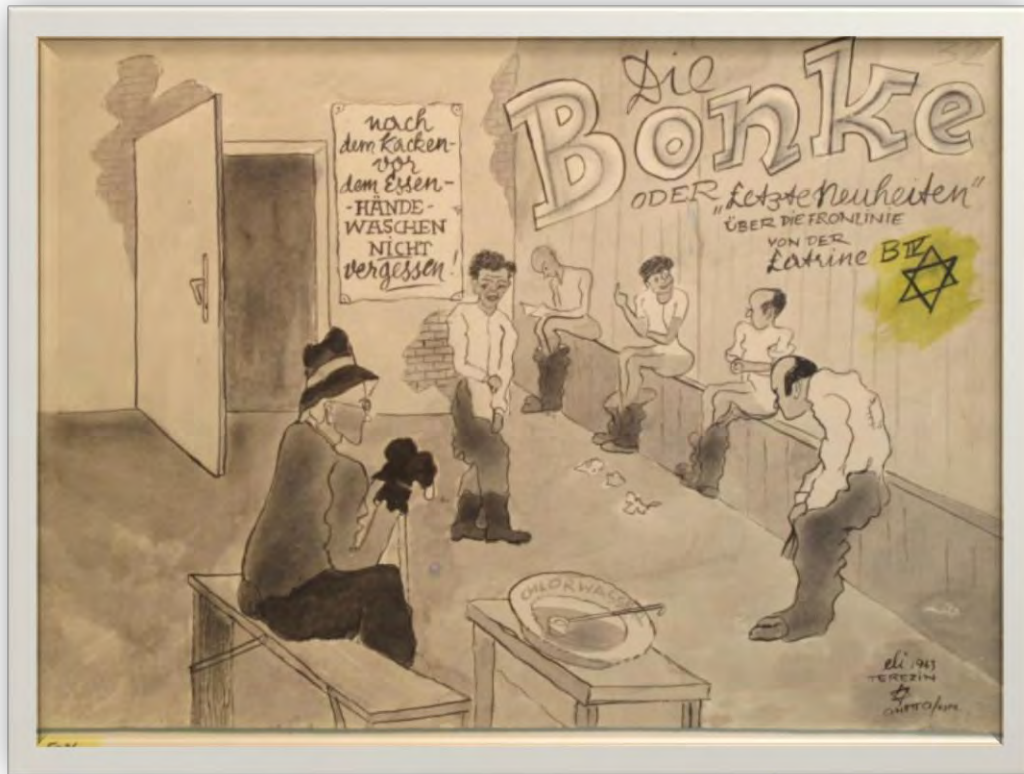
"Klodienst,<sup>24</sup> a man or a woman, watch to ensure that the lavatory doesn't get soiled with shit," Arnošt Klein records. "When a patient or a client is done, the Klodienst immediately examines the 'throne' after him so the next one can sit down on a clean toilet. If dirt is observed, the Klodienst goes, swearing, for bleaching powder, spreads it on the throne and locks the cabin up to await the arrival of the Putzkolonne (Schmutzkolonne)."<sup>25</sup>



–“Sir, do you take soup?” Her business with typhoid patients: lentil soup for bread  
*Leskly's comment:* –Everyone knew and recognized this woman. She stood at the gate where people came to receive soup. Lentil soup we received seldom, basically it was boiled down slops. Here's what the woman did. She had many bowls, and she collected soup in them. With these, she went to the block that housed typhus patients or old people. They could not eat bread, only liquid. That's where she brought her soup. Everyone knew her. She always asked –“Will the gentleman take his soup?” This is what she looked like.”

<sup>24</sup> Klo – coll. from Klosett (Ger.) – lavatory, Dienst (Ger.) – service.

<sup>25</sup> Putz-Kolonne (Schmutz-Kolonne) (Ger.) – a cleaning detail (filth detail).



Bonkes [*Slang*: rumors] or “the latest news” from the front-lines of the latrine of block B IV. [The sign:] After doing a poo, before meal, don’t forget to wash your hands! ... Chlorine water

“...When I go for my ration after work, I first completely relax myself and dump the stress. For this purpose I stand somewhere in the middle of the courtyard, closer or further away from the vessels with the swill, and I do some relaxation exercises. For about a minute, I stand completely at ease, then manage 2-3 short steps in a distance of no more than 1/4 meter, and once again a stop for a minute or two, then small forward progress once again. Quietly resigned, with penitential dignity, the procession of the penitents slowly moves ahead toward the **sanctum sanctorum** of the kitchen pot where informers, **menaždynstr**, **menažkomisar**, **kripo**, **ode**, **gettowache**<sup>26</sup> are already engaged in “worship.” A great many old ladies and gentlemen in worn out clothes provide oversight, with mess kits, bowls cups and other utensils in their hands instead of prayer books. So I slowly trudge in the direction of the objective, finally reaching it in 5 more minutes, or maybe 10, or maybe twenty or more...”<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Menazhdynstr (*Ger.* incorr. Menagedienster) – distributor of ration cards; menazhkomisar – chief distributor of ration cards; kripo – criminal police members; ode – from Ordnungdienst, OD – order keepers; Ghetto wache – Jewish police; lajtr (*incorr.* Ger. Leiter) – chief.

<sup>27</sup> A. Klein, op. cit., entry of 1.9.1943.



Since doctors starve too – a cook is always privileged.

## 6. Health services

"In spite of everything, we did not give up the fight against death," a former Terezín surgeon recounts. "We kept going. In addition to the main hospital, we established auxiliary hospitals, a children's hospital, an infirmary for [the terminally ill], and an old people's home. True, available space for this was minimal, but still every sick person, everyone needing aid, received medical care from the orderlies.

"...Again and again there were memorable feats. It is also worthy of mention that, with such miserable conditions as prevailed in Terezín, blood transfusions could be given and that especially the doctors and nurses, though themselves malnourished, gave blood.

"It should never be forgotten that 34,261 people died in Terezín itself. Even in the most terrible time of epidemic and mass death, the Terezín health workers never gave in to hopelessness but again and again tried to do the best for their patients despite the prevailing conditions.



Terezinka. [On the door:] For men

*Leskly's comment:* ~~It~~ is diarrhea, dysentery; it was called ~~terezinka~~.” There was no space: tens thousands people per sq. kilometer. There were no beds available in hospitals, only for those under patronage. I laid down on the floor for a month.”



Death rate: 150 daily

"...During epidemics, isolation [wards] were rapidly organized. When the number of patients with tuberculosis grew drastically, a special fresh-air hospital was organized. In the spring of 1944, before the Red Cross commission's [visit] the patients with TBC and their doctors were deported to Auschwitz..."<sup>28</sup>

### 7. Nazi decrees, courts and sentences

Whoever you were, Zionist, Czech nationalist, Christian or orthodox Jew, you were a Jew by birth and were punished for it.

A Jewish man was obliged, according to the decree of February 1942, "to welcome anyone who belongs to camp management, SS guards and Czech gendarmerie, by removing his headgear. Women are to bow. All persons wearing a German uniform must be saluted in the same way. While addressing them, a guilty mien should be assumed. Unless otherwise ordered, a distance of one meter should be observed."

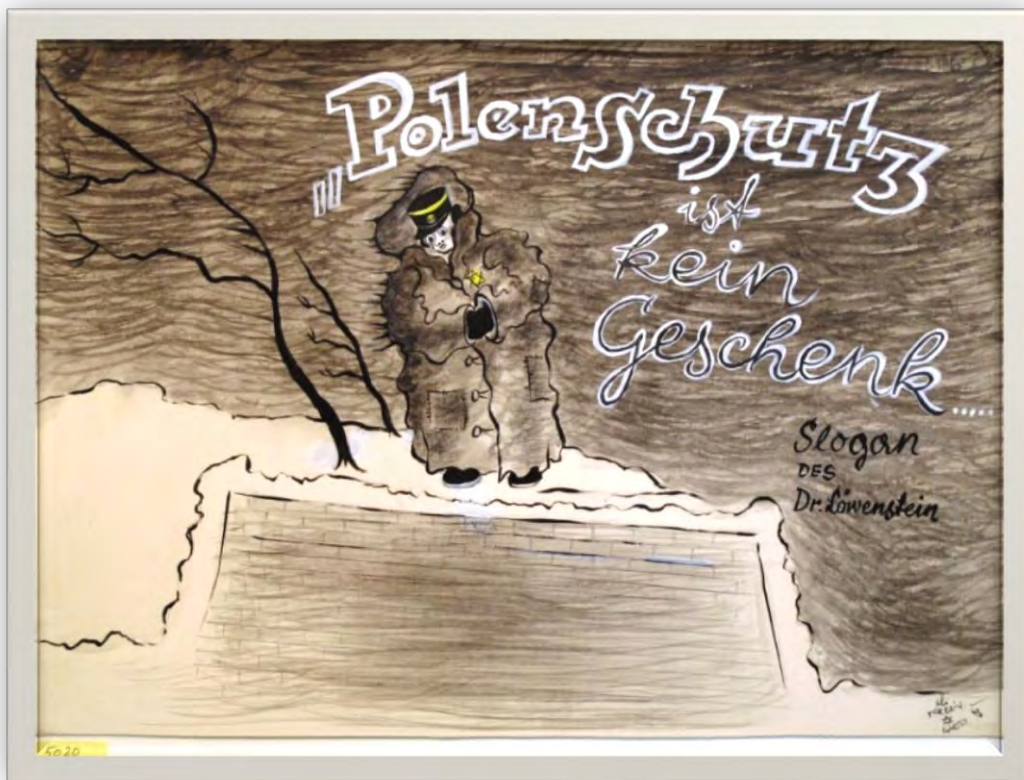


–Obligatory salute.” Penalty: deportation with the next transport to the East

<sup>28</sup> Dr. Erich Springer, *Zdravotnictví v Terezínském ghettě* (Health Service in Terezín ghetto), manuscript, E.M. archive. Dr. Springer was active as chief surgeon of the ghetto. In 1988 he presented me a copy of the manuscript with dedication: –To dearest Elena from the author.” During a friendly chat he recalled the past which in no way could be named pleasant. But the meeting itself was definitely pleasant.



On the rampart: the morning salutation of the Ghetto Guards to Dr. Löwenstein:  
„...Good morning, Herr Doktor—



"Deliverance from Poland is not given for nothing" ... Quotation of Dr. Löwenstein

**Terezín had an internal prison** where people were held for minor crimes. Court verdicts were published in a weekly bulletin of the Jewish administration which also publicized new regulations about receiving parcels, the danger of bee-stings and so on. On the last page, next to a picture of the Goddess of Justice, one could read the following:

**"15.4.1944.** The Ghetto Court sentenced:

**RAUSENBERG JACOB, X/1-480** — to 14 days in prison. Offender is also banned from occupying a position in ghetto institutions. Offender stole 10 kilograms of potatoes from the property of the Jewish self-administration.

**"SELIG BERNHARD, X/1-583** — to 7 days in prison. Offender is also banned from occupying a position in ghetto institutions. Offender stole 2 kilograms of bread from the property of the Jewish self-administration.

**"PESE LEO, 1/90-11387** — to 5 days in prison. Offender tried to get a meal using someone else's food ration card."

The lists were regularly updated and the names were transferred to other lists: for deportation to Auschwitz. As far as **we know, none of the "criminals" survived.**

For especially "serious crimes" the whole town was punished. It was forbidden to switch on lights and be on the streets after 6 p.m., this ban also applied to cultural activities.

On November 11th, 1943, the whole ghetto population, except for inpatients, was marched outside the ghetto border, to the **Bohušovice** valley. The Nazi command had heard rumors about prisoner escapes and decided to re-count all prisoners. This took 12 hours. As a result, the deception was discovered (in the lists, there were 30 fictitious names instead of names of the fugitives). The Jewish Elder, Jacob Edelstein, paid for it with his life.



Head Count: —You have to be counted.” ... Back from counting – to the ghetto! Children and old people first. ...November 1943, Bohušovice Valley

## 8. The multi-faced ghetto

European Jews brought with them to Terezín all the diversity of their native cultures, religions and political views.

"Political activity is increasing a lot in all ghetto matters," Zionist Egon Redlich remarks.

"Despite all the troubles, Jews are beginning to split into hundreds of factions, one against the other. All of this would be comical if the situation weren't so serious."<sup>29</sup>

"In Terezín, every tenth prisoner was Christian," Hans Hirschberg observes in his postwar memoirs. "There were clearly no differences between Lutherans, Calvinists and Bohemian-Moravian Brethren. But also between Protestants and Catholics, fraternal unity was the rule. From the very first, every sect had made it a point to invite the others to their lecture evenings."<sup>30</sup>



...Ghettoized. Baptized Jews are coming

*Leskly*: People came dressed in a wide variety of clothes. They looked completely different – people from Austria looked like Tyroleans. One could see various national costumes – Czech national costumes, dirndls [traditional dress worn in southern Germany and Austria], a lot of fur caps. Well, they say that „clothes make the man—here one can say „stars make Jews.—Even nuns were brought in. There were supposedly twelve different religious denominations in Theresienstadt.

<sup>29</sup> Saul S. Friedman (ed.), *The Terezín Diary of Gonda Redlich*, University Press of Kentucky, 1992, entry of December 16, 1942. Egon (Gonda) Redlich (1916 – 1944), a notable Zionist, headed the Jewish Administration's Youth Department.

<sup>30</sup> UOA, p. 125. Hans Walter Hirschberg, born 1893, lawyer, notary. Deported to Terezín from Berlin 10.2.1944. Member of the Juvenile Court of Law in the ghetto. Liberated in Terezín.



**Rabbi Richard Feder remarked:** "Christians held their Sunday services and we [rabbis] always got on well with them. They held their funeral services in a different hall, but used the same hearses."<sup>31</sup>

Dr. Rabbi Leo Baeck<sup>32</sup> watched the Dutch Jews arriving in **Terezín**: "I stood there when Jews from Holland arrived on a truck. A Gestapo agent read off their names; those named got off. As I heard the names, I literally heard the history of the Jewish Netherlands that dated back to the seventeenth century. I heard a list of the Dutch aristocracy."

The Dutch brought with them a mix (unique even for **Terezín**) of Sephardic Jews, the core of the Amsterdam Portuguese-Jewish congregation. Free to practice their faith, the Sephardic **Jews had attained the highest positions in Amsterdam's educational and state systems.**

Totally 4,894 Dutch Jews were transported from the Netherlands in 1943 and 1944, mostly from the Westerbork transit camp. The SS deported 3,010 of the Dutch Jews to Auschwitz; at least 169 more died in **Terezín**. Approximately 1,500 survived.



Arrival of Jews from Denmark in "Terezín Spa"... "Where do they buy butter and eggs here?"  
*Leskly's comment:* "The Danish Jews had been told that it was "Theresienbad Spa." So they had left all things at home and arrived very elegantly dressed, in furs... Well, their king cared for them, they received food packages. They were put in special rooms with a few people in each.

<sup>31</sup> UOA, p. 125. Rabbi Dr. Richard Feder (1875 – 1970), deported to Terezín 13.7.1944, performed there religious duties. After the war was elected Head Rabbi of Bohemia Jewish communities. He wrote a textbook in Hebrew, a history of the Jews in Palestine, several books for young people, and a book *The Jewish Tragedy* (1947), about his Terezín experience.

<sup>32</sup> Rabbi Dr. Leo Baeck (1873 - 1956) was, probably, the most reputable among Terezín prisoners. An outstanding philosopher and theologian, leader of German Jewry, from a position of Chief German Army Rabbi on WW1 front, up to President of Executive Council of German Jewry in the 1930s. In Terezín, Member of the Elders' Council, and from 1944 its chairman. Delivered a number of lectures on Judaism, philosophy and history. Quoted from: UOA, p. 190.

456 Jews were brought to **Terezín** from Denmark. They were lucky enough to receive much better treatment than the Dutch.

"October 5, 1943. Danish Jews have arrived. ... They brought the Danish Jews to a room and served them food on a table prepared with a white tablecloth. They even gave them postcards to write home."<sup>33</sup>



Jewish Order Police from Westerbork camp transport, Holland.

*Leskly's comment:* —A group of Jewish deportees is transferred to Terezín from Westerbork concentration camp. Two Dutch Jewish policemen are seen on the foreground. They wear goggles over their military caps.”

The food and accommodations of the 'Danes' were like those of "Prominents", a privileged group of **Terezín** inmates. Such treatment reflected the special concern demonstrated by King Christian X and other Danish Gentiles for their fellow countrymen. Over 90 percent of Denmark's Jews had managed to escape Eichmann's roundup thanks to the assistance of fishermen, pastors, students, housewives, etc. Those who were sent to **Terezín** received registered food parcels, money, letters and other benefits.

Finally, the 423 surviving "Royal" Jews were taken back home by the Red Cross buses on April 14-15, 1945, i.e. three weeks before the war's end. Erich Lichtblau depicted this moment in a drawing.

<sup>33</sup> E.Redlich, op. cit., record 5.10.1943.

## 9. Forward to Palestine! The spirit of kibbutz

Lichtblau drew his caricatures in the overcrowded room 73 of the Hannover barracks, amid his Zionist friends. The spirit of kibbutz life, born in Dobešice, didn't wither away in ghetto. Jewish tradition was adhered to as much as possible. Hebrew, history and geography of Israel, the Arab question(?!), Theodor Herzl, biographies of Zionist figures, sociology and economics were all studied. Skills in agriculture and construction were acquired, Spartan education was celebrated. The idea was that after the war the inmates would all come to Palestine, a dry land of rocks and deserts, and transform it into a blooming garden.



In Beit Chalutzot [Women Zionist Settlers' House] in the Hamburg Barracks, Room No. 305  
*Leskly's comment:* My wife lived there. Every Friday evening there was Oneg Shabbat [*Hebr.* Joy of Sabbath, Jewish celebration in honor of the Shabbat]. We sang Hebrew songs and learned the Hebrew language. We dreamed to go to Palestine after liberation.”

According to Jiří Deiml, there was a great need for a mentor among the young Zionists in Terezín, someone who would show them the right way. "Tolstovian A.D. Gordon was our ideal. Then came Ber Borochov, well, and Marx too. ... Our group leader was Kurt Hatschek, nicknamed Kartáček<sup>34</sup>; in Czech, a small brush or toothbrush. A very smart boy but with complexes, and rather plain-looking. He was very attracted to the opposite sex. Courted one

<sup>34</sup> Kurt Adolf Hatschek (1922 – 1944), deported to Terezín 8.4.1942. Teacher of Hebrew, member of the youth movement. In 1943 worked on compiling catalogue of Hebrew books. Deported to Auschwitz 28.9.1944. Died in Dachau.

girl and she rejected him. So he plunged completely into self-education. Studied Russian. Observed the Jewish tradition. Prayed, and yet was the most far left of us all."<sup>35</sup>



A "Chalutz" person in the ghetto and his three points. 1. To learn Hebrew; 2. To give to sick chaverim [comrades] one ration of sugar and margarine; 3. To keep a right balance. [In the top right corner:] "Kartáček" Kurt Hatschek Ivrit-more [Hebrew teacher]; [On the book:] Kaléko עברית [Hebrew]



A dream (Fata Morgana). [Inscription on the house:] Old people home for weary chalutzim of the sixth aliya. Original chalutz Dr. Walter Wiener

<sup>35</sup> Jiří Deiml (1921), studied at the trade college. Left-wing Zionist. Deported to Terezin 18.1.1942 from Plzeň, Bohemia. Member of the *Maarakh*, youth branch of *Hechalutz*. Deported to Auschwitz 28.9.1944. Liberated in Blechhammer. Returned to Prague, in 1968 emigrated to Israel. Lives in Tel Aviv. Interviewed by Elena Makarova in Tel Aviv, 1997. Quoted: from UOA, p. 392.

*Leskly's comment:* –In Terezín, all were split up into groups. We were in a Hechalutz group, we even had a Hechalutz room. There was Dr. Walter Wiener from Brno; we spent a lot of time together. Once he told me: –We are not young people anymore. If one day we arrive in Palestine, they will send us to a home for the old chalutzim of the Sixth Aliyah.”

Erich Lichtblau's picture shows a train leaving Prague for Terezín. Prague is now Jew-free. Forever, believe the Zionists. There is no return there, ever again. Forward to Palestine! But meanwhile it remained an unreachable star in the dark.

### 10. Back to Prague. Czech Jewish patriots

The Czech-Jewish patriots, however, clung to their Czech identity. This movement was mainly of a cultural nature and reflected a respectful attitude towards Jews in pre-war Czechoslovakia under President Tomáš Masaryk. **Miloš Salus, an activist of this movement in the ghetto, wrote in 1944: “Smetana – Dvořák – Prague! ... Who among us would not love Prague, who among us would not love to hear song and music – the purest emanation of a Czech soul? That is why our program is attuned to the harmony of love, and that is why it greets us with the silhouette of our beloved Prague and the eternally young work of the genius of Smetana and Dvořák.”**<sup>36</sup>



Motto of „Czech-Jewish union”: Our –Zion” is Prague. Prague???? Prague is –Judenrein”  
[cleansed of Jews]

<sup>36</sup> Miloš Salus (1896 – 1944), teacher from Kladno, Bohemia, set up the Czech-Jewish organization and the Salus Group that held hundreds of lectures and seminars in Czech. The quote is from his speech 21.8.44 Prague in Czech Poetry, UOA, p. 76.

A comic magazine "Shalom on Friday" # 2, April 16, 1943 also responded to the issue:  
 "Sensation in Terezín! Bus Route Prague - Terezín Introduced

***The Escapes Have Stopped***

Since, lately, there have been more escapes from Terezín, the Council of Elders, with permission of the camp commandant, decided to limit escapes by introducing bus connections with all the big cities whence transports to Terezín originated. This would eventually meet the desire of the majority of the inhabitants, namely that everyone could visit his home. The first line opens next Friday, 23th of April, 1943. Direction: Terezín-Prague. **The buses are deluxe. The price couldn't be lower: 2 cigarettes for a one way trip, 3 cigarettes for a round trip.**

Those who want to return to Terezín are asked to inform the block Elder beforehand, to have a place reserved.

The public are requested, as far as possible, not to nick heating devices, ashtrays, seats or other equipment from the buses. The ghetto administration maintains that every outing to the high seas will contribute to our progress here, and suggests that everyone bring their Aryan acquaintances from Prague to let them admire the Terezín ghetto.

The schedule is available at the Terezín Labor Dept. **Buses depart every Friday."**

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"Terezín-Prague-Terezín — the Sensation Continues!

***It happened! — A Bus Brings a Terezín Tourist to Prague — One Day in Prague — Visitor Shares His Impressions***

The eyewitness, Pan P. St., talks about about his Prague experiences (Copyright Shalom on Friday):

...In Prague, I liked the trams: they are much more convenient than our hearses. **I think it'd be worth our while to introduce trams in Terezín. I'll certainly submit an application to the Council of Elders.** To prevent disorders, it would be best to issue tickets as coupons. For example, a coupon for the route Magdeburg – Hamburg with a change to another line, Terezín – Bohušovice. It would be great!

As we entered the Karlín district, **where all streets and houses are familiar to me, I couldn't restrain myself and jumped out of the bus, which continued on to the city center.**

As soon as my feet touched the soil of Prague, I became the subject of lively interest among the local inhabitants. Women and children surrounded me, gazing at my star with admiration, asking what it could possibly mean. By chance, I found some twenty stars in my pocket, which I, as vice-elder of the room, had kept for my roommates. I handed them out **to the children, and you really can't imagine** their delight. How thrilled they were when they looked at these stars! They immediately pinned them on their clothes and started to play **Jews.**"<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Quoted from UOA, p. 303.

## 11. The construction yard and backbreaking work

Very few artists could be placed within their specialty. In the Technical Department's graphic workshop, illustrations and charts were drawn to meet **other departments' and camp administration orders**. The workers there had one essential privilege – until 1944, they were not deported. But despite his professional credentials, there was no job there for Erich Lichtblau. The employment department sent him to work in construction.

Chopping down trees in **Dobešice**, had undermined Erich's health; Elsa had got back trouble **from working in the fields. But survival conditions in Terezín were much worse**. Professional builders were rare. The laborers Erich worked with on the building sites came from all walks of life, many of them were members of the free professions. But there was nowhere else to work, and without work you could starve. Among his acquaintances Erich got to know the interesting **Arnošt Klein** whose diary was quoted above. These satirical notes describe exactly the **Terezín** that Erich depicted in his caricatures. Curiously, neither Klein, nor Lichtblau-Leskly dared to pin down the main culprits of the disaster. Their critique focused on the system of internal ghetto administration that had actually been created by Jews, though following Nazi orders. The main defect of this system was patronage. By means of this so-called Vitamin P, one could get a job in the kitchen, which meant not starving; receive accommodations not in the barracks but in an apartment house; get a double ration, and, eventually, be removed from a deportation list. All this, of course, was at the expense of the majority who lacked the precious vitamin.



Overcrowded. You surely need vitamin –P” (Protection) in the Quartering Department; with 41 degree fever

"Šlojs<sup>38</sup> and profiteering are the main means of existence in Jobbertown," writes Arnošt Klein. "They actually prolong life. They are augmented by the following sources: packages and different additives to a ration. And here are more sources: food coupons, a 'normal-plus' ration, sick rations, bonus rations, hack-jobs, commerce, barter, marriage, Aryans, smuggling, garbage, accidental finds, requisitions, Prominent rations.

"... In our Jobbertown, everyday searches for livelihood are filled with incredible miracles.

This inexhaustible source of public entertainment and personal delight has nothing in common with sports and games which are not much favored here.

"The first wonder: there is no money in Jobbertown. **Everything's for free; first and foremost, meals.** You get out in the morning from your cozy cot, climb down two floors on a ladder (morning exercise?) and – off you go to the courtyard with a bowl. There, in exchange for a tiny square of the Esskarte<sup>39</sup> **they'll give you a portion of odoriferous hot coffee.** Not too strong, which is good for my weak heart. And not too much sugar, either! **No one here is threatened with diabetes...**

"**All this is free, and all is fifty-fifty/equal?, no discrimination.** ... How light, how free you feel, losing kilo after kilo, – hurrah, you're already down to fifty kilos! **It's only in the legs that you still feel some weight, so you have to drag them along behind you.**"<sup>40</sup>

## **12. To embody and be embodied**

Terezín artists have jointly created an incontestable historical document – a kind of camp life "hologram." Realists and surrealists, caricaturists and naturalists – all of them aspired to embody this unlikely "transit existence."

Artists scrutinized the town's barracks, streets, bastions, fortifications, ramparts and internal courtyards from many different angles. Daily events in the ghetto, such as lines for meals, prisoners' arrivals, preparations for transport and departures to the east, illnesses and deaths, as well as concerts, rehearsals and lectures are reflected in hundreds of pictures. Each of the artists treated reality in her or his own way.

The key style was realism. Many regarded drawing as an equivalent to keeping a diary.

There were no cameras in the ghetto, but there was a tremendous hunger to preserve a memory, to remember and be remembered.

"Your first picture," Egon Redlich tells his baby son Dan in his diary. "In different times, we would go out to take pictures. But here we have to draw them. The artist drew you **patiently.**"<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Šlojs, šlojska, sluice (from Schleuse – *Ger.*), a collection point for new arrivals in the ghetto; also for those being sent further, to other camps. In šlojs, disinfection and personal inspection were made; part of the luggage was plundered. In Terezín slang – also a search of prisoners, or any theft.

<sup>39</sup> Food coupon (*Ger.*).

<sup>40</sup> A. Klein's Diary, record of 31.3.1944.

<sup>41</sup> E. Redlich, op. cit., p. 159. The artist was Bedřich Fritta (see below).





Leo Haas. –Showcase Jews”



Bedrich Fritta. Old people in the attic

Grotesque and farce, however, were inevitable, called upon by the absurd and tragic human situation. Expressionists **"recreated" Terezín. In their pictures it still remained recognizable** but was strikingly different: grotesque, metaphorical, deformed. They managed to reconstruct the true atmosphere of the ghetto, **creating a sort of Terezín Apocalypse.**

### 13 Ghetto humor

What is Jewish humor? One could put this question to **the Terezín lecturers who**, we estimate, gave over 60 lectures on the subject. Except that most of the lecturers were killed and, with rare exceptions, their lecture notes **didn't survive either. While in Terezín, the** young writer and critic Josef (Pepek) Taussig<sup>42</sup> wrote a treatise on the nature of humor, which, alas, shared the same fate.

In his article on **Terezín Cabarets, Pepek ridicules the** ghetto's unique humor.

**"Above all it's a special kind** of humor, also called ghetto-humor that prevails in all our cabarets. What are its main characteristics? It may be the most topical and timely, but at the same time the most confined humor in the world.

**"...They (the jokes – E.M.)** are restricted exclusively to Th.[eresienstadt] matters and moreover only to elementary ones: food, living quarters and rumors. And since food quality **doesn't change essentially, so the jokes are also essentially the same, whether they deal** with lentil soup, extract-soup or dried **vegetable soup. And as it's the same with living** quarters: we repeatedly hear jokes about fleas, the Housing dept. and the box-rooms (to which a piquant flavor can be added).<sup>43</sup> The never-ending number of jokes, songs and poems about rumors is a reaction to the steady spreading of untrue news that appears in **every place where true information is inaccessible. I don't want to quote any; whoever saw a** performance in the yard knows more than enough of those.

**"...As far as those comments deride or even criticize,** they do so only about generally known phenomena which none of the Th.[eresienstadt] inhabitants, to the last man, agrees with. **The fact that the whole "beautification" is only a facade set in front of our real life is well** known to every inhabitant of the Jewish settlement. Thus the attacks turn mainly against **those who don't always sit on benches during Th.[eresienstadt] performances. For example: all fleas will be painted with phosphorus so the committee will think they're fireflies."**<sup>44</sup>

Taussig, being an insider in this historical phenomenon, looks down on it. However, as young **Terezín actor Jiří Süssland** truly observed, "humor is born in a crowd." It clearly pertains both to Klein's notes and Leskly's cartoons.

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<sup>42</sup> Josef (Pepek) Taussig (1914 – 1945), writer, photographer, philologist, artist. Collected materials on Jaroslav Hašek. Wrote an unpublished Saga of Taussig family. Under pen-name Josef Krk, published *Bořek, the Bane of Noisetown* (1938) illustrated with his own drawings. Published a photographic album of Prague (1939). In 1940, worked in the village Milovy with members of *Mladá Kultura* [Young Culture], then, in 1942, in the labor camp in Moravská Ostrava. Deported to Terezin from Prague 5.12.1942. Worked in 'Spedition,' Shipping Dept. Wrote manuscript on Czech humor. Contributor to the cultural column in the youth magazine *Vedem*. Author of critical pieces on theater performances. Deported to Auschwitz 28.10.1944, volunteered to accompany his parents. Survived death march to Flossenbürg. Died 3 days before liberation.

<sup>43</sup> Box-rooms = kumbáls (see above ref. 20). One woman told us about her first date in a kumbál. She was so frightened of the bustle heard from all sides that she gave up love.

<sup>44</sup> Quoted from J. Taussig, *O terezínských kabaretech, Terezínské studie a dokumenty*, Praha: Academia/Institut Terezínské iniciativy, 2001, s. 308 – 346.

"In all things Erich saw a tragicomic side," Elsa Leskly reminisced. "So much grief was around that drawing this as it really was would be self-destructive. Certainly, it was not a conscious choice of a genre, he simply couldn't do otherwise. Probably, it was a means of defense."

#### 14. Rumors (bonkes)

Terezín was awash with rumors – probably a reaction to the total ban on information imposed by the Nazis.

Arnošt Klein wrote: "At the time, there was a battle at Stalingrad and fighting in Africa, but we don't know a thing because here in Jobbertown they don't use telephones, the telegraph or radios. So we have no idea on which continent there is fighting or if anyone's fighting at all any more, if there is peace now but we weren't told."

There was a particular blackout on any information about what it meant to be sent "east." Maybe it really meant erecting a new improved ghetto, as the Nazis declared – nobody knew the truth. Or didn't want to know.



Bonkes [*Slang*: rumors] from the theatre of war; comrade Paul Kohn (courier with Czech Gendarmerie station) is a „war correspondent—of the „Beit-Chalutz—[Zionist Settlers' Home] in Terezín. The newest from the front (the Bonke!!!); Leningrad Kalinin Moskau Stalingrad

Engineer Franz Weiss, risking his life, had assembled a radio receiver in the attic of one of the barracks and could listen to news.

**"The first important transmission I caught was the bombing of Oberhausen by the RAF.**

Oberhausen was the German center for ball-bearing production. I reported the landing of Allied forces in Sicily but nobody wanted to believe that Mussolini had been arrested. We criticized the Allies when they got stuck on Monte Cassino and did not advance for a long time. Although I often listened to news about important events, I was surprised that the fate of the Jews was never mentioned. It seemed that the word Jew did not exist. ...

**"My heart stopped, however, when the English news reported on June 18, 1944, that 5,000 Czech Jews were killed in the gas chambers of Auschwitz on the birthday of the late Czech President, Tomáš G. Masaryk.**

**"We finally knew where the transports from Terezín went, and we knew what was in store for us. Few people, however, believed me when I told them the story. Many refused even to listen. Some insisted that it was Allied propaganda. The human brain seemed to be somehow programmed to ignore one's own fate as soon as it became inescapable."**<sup>45</sup>

## **15. Cultural boom**

Professor Utitz recalled: **"A series of lectures about great thinkers of the past was attended by 600-800 people. And, mind you, these reports were delivered in the late fall, in a huge barracks attic where the icy wind howled through cracks in the roof. People had to climb up there on rickety stairs and return back home in complete darkness."**<sup>46</sup>

**When reading the "Free Time Administration" reports, one forgets when and where they were written. One of the reports states:**

**"The warm summer [of 1943] proved beneficial: we could use the barracks yards. Thus, in August, 37 comradeship/social evenings were organized, with a total audience of about 10,900 people. Apart from this, there were 24 lectures with audiences of 1,380 and 13 large block events that brought together some 8,050 spectators, so that the overall number of participants in this month reached 20,330."**<sup>47</sup>

**"It was utterly amazing that such great spiritual momentum developed in Terezín in such a short time," Alice Bloemendal remarked. "Professors from all disciplines, medical specialists with great reputations arrived in large numbers. There were specialists for every imaginable disease... Side by side with the great physicians came former federal lawyers, docents from Vienna, Heidelberg, Prague, Berlin etc. Philologists, philosophers, writers, actors, musicians, artists, sculptors and architects completed the picture. And this whole apparatus with such tremendous spiritual potential... placed itself, or offered to place itself, at the disposal of the ghetto."**<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> UOA, p. 281.

<sup>46</sup> E. Utitz, op. cit.

<sup>47</sup> UOA, p. 61.

<sup>48</sup> UOA, p. 52. Alice Bloemendal (1874 – 1959), school principal from Hamburg. In Terezín she delivered over a hundred lectures on various aspects of art and literature.



Freizeitgestaltung; Free time activities in ghetto Theresienstadt are „work,—all the rest, however, is „free time—figuration

As a result, over six hundred theatrical performances and over one hundred musical pieces were performed in the ghetto; about ten thousand pictures were drawn, including children's; a number of diaries, verses, plays, critiques were produced; over 2,500 lectures delivered. According to Elsa Leskly, Erich seldom attended cultural events. He worked hard, and drawing occupied all his free time. "He did not belong to the Terežín elite. Nobody knew that he was an artist. He lived in the world of manual workers, although among them there were many outstanding personalities. Once, however, he took me to see an operetta about a ghetto girl who marries a cook."

Gonda Redlich also saw it: "March 24 (1943). Yesterday I was at the operetta "Das Ghettomädel." This spectacle is a shame to our culture. To admire ghetto policemen is a strange and abominable thing. But what is even more deplorable is that young girls take part in the show."<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> E. Redlich, op. cit.



"The Ghetto Girl," operetta in 3 acts.

Dear little ghetto girl, give a little love to me. [The sign in top right corner:] (After the penal transport of the young ghetto guards eastwards) Today!! (Suggestion!) (Parody show) The 2nd cast with old artists for the "elder people" of the ghetto



A hit singer Hambo arrived in the ghetto with the Danish transport and sang a song... “I’m dying, I’m dying, tralala, tralala, tralala”

## 16. The Potemkin village

Preparations for the visit of the International Red Cross Commission (23.6.1944) began in early spring. At the beginning of May, two transports were sent East **from Terezín**. They contained the blind, tubercular and others – anyone who could blemish the town's positive image. **Arnošt Klein** was deported too, though this was not the end of ghetto humor. *Vedem* (We Lead), a teenager magazine from L 417, reacted to **the 'beautification'** process with a feuilleton titled *Terezín - the Future Spa*.

"Father **Bedřich**<sup>50</sup> had the gymnasium, which had been turned into a hospital, cleared so it could be converted into a synagogue, theater, and cinema. According to the latest news, which I obtained just a few hours before writing this, an outdoor cafe is to be opened on the gymnasium roof. He had the barbed-wire fence on the square removed and the square transformed into a park, where he had a music pavilion erected to give the inhabitants of **Terezín an opportunity for entertainment and refreshment** during their lunch hour and in the evening after work.



A "clean" ghetto for the gentlemen from the Red Cross: all sidewalks will be **scrubbed**

<sup>50</sup> A transparent allusion to the camp commandant of that time, Karl Rahm. (Bedřich is Czech for Fritz, a nickname for Germans.)



For gentlemen of the Red Cross [everything] is beautified and decorated; (for ghetto Jews by the flowers); Repair Workshop for Dentures; repair acceptance 8.00 - 16.00; [Sign in the window:] Hold your mouth and your teeth healthy



The "dining room" in the barracks... Another bluff for the Red Cross!



"One fine day during the survey of our city, Daddy declared that he did not like the fences dividing the houses in Terezín; in his opinion, they spoiled the general view. He reprimanded the burgomaster of our free settlement and ordered us to take all fences down within forty-eight hours.

"... A restaurant is also to be established in the park on the square. It has not been settled yet what is to be sold there. The town council for our world-class spa has ordered a number of horse-drawn carriages. The working population of Terezín will also be well served. A trolleybus network is to be established to make coming and going to work easier. And when checking on the city homes for young people, Father Bedřich issued an order to have them all renovated in the shortest possible time. Since our dear Father wanted to be able to check up on his children while they worked, he set new working hours. That is the latest news I've been able to extract from the brains of our bonkes men. Part of these regulations have already been put into practice and let us hope that our bonkes men were right about the other reports as well. And we wish to express our thanks to Father Bedřich for working to enhance our wellbeing." – Sydicus<sup>51</sup>

## 17. The Painters' affair

Just a few days before the June 1944 visit of the Red Cross, the ghetto was shaken by very disturbing news. Well-known and respected graphics workshop artists Bedřich Fritta,<sup>52</sup> Leo Haas,<sup>53</sup> Otto Ungar,<sup>54</sup> Ferdinand Bloch,<sup>55</sup> and architect Norbert Troller<sup>56</sup> were suddenly

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<sup>51</sup> Marie Rút Křížková, Kurt Jiří Kotouč, Zdeněk Ornest, *We Are Children Just the Same: Vedem, the Secret Magazine by the Boys of Terezín*, Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1995, pp. 127 – 128. The Sydicus' real name is unknown.

<sup>52</sup> Fritta (Tauszig), Bedřich (Fritz) (1906 – 1944), well-known illustrator and caricaturist, worked for the satirical magazine *Simplicus* (Simpl) edited by Adolf Hoffmeister. Deported from Prague to Terezín on December 4, 1941 as part of the *Aufbaukommando* (construction unit). In Theresienstadt he headed the Technical Department, where many artists were assigned. There he had access to drawing materials and paper, and he and other artists made drawings of Theresienstadt and its prisoners. On July 17, 1944, Fritta was arrested in connection with the "painters' affair" and sent to the Small Fortress with his wife Johanna and son Tomáš, then aged three. Johanna died of hunger. Bedřich Fritta was deported to Auschwitz from Small Fortress on October 26, 1944; on November 8 he died there of dystrophia. Tomáš Fritta survived.

<sup>53</sup> Haas, Leo (Leopold) (1901 – 1983), studied at the Karlsruhe Art Academy and was a well-recognized painter. He was deported to the labor camp Nisko. Haas' drawings document the story of this camp. In 1942 he arrived in Terezín, where he worked on construction sites before joining the drafting workshop of the Technical Department. On July 17, 1944, Leo Haas was arrested in connection with the "painters' affair" and brought to the Small Fortress. He was sent to Auschwitz together with his friend Fritta. In November 1944, Haas was transferred with a group of artists to Sachsenhausen and coerced by the Nazis into forgery of Western currency ("Operation Bernhard"). He was liberated in the Ebensee camp in May 1945. After his liberation, Haas returned to Terezín to recover the works hidden before his arrest. He and his wife adopted Fritta's son Tomáš. Haas lived and worked as artist in GDR. Died in East Berlin on August 13, 1983.

<sup>54</sup> Otto Ungar (1901 – 1945). In 1924 – 1926, attended the painting classes of Prof. Thiele at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague. After graduation from the Academy, he returned to his native Brno, where worked as a teacher of drawing and descriptive geometry at the Jewish gymnasium. Deported to Terezín on January 28, 1942 with his wife and daughter. Worked in the drafting room of the Technical Department. On July 17, 1944, he was arrested in connection with "the painters' affair" and interned in the Small Fortress. In the fall of 1944 he was transferred to Auschwitz with his family. In January 1945 transferred to Buchenwald, where he lived to see the liberation. Died on July 25, 1945 in the hospital of Blankenheim near Weimar. His wife and daughter survived.

<sup>55</sup> Ferdinand Bloch (1898 – 1944). Merchant and amateur artist. In 1938, he tried to emigrate to Italy but then settled with his wife, Antonína Seelenfreund, in Prague. Deported to Terezín together with his wife on July 30, 1942. Worked in the drafting room of the Technical Department. On July 17, 1944, he was arrested in connection with "the painters' affair" and transferred to the Small Fortress where his wife died on the same day. Bloch died later, on October 31, 1944.

<sup>56</sup> Norbert Troller (1896 – 1981), was a World War I Austrian officer. He studied at the Vienna Art Academy and became an architect. In 1933 he married a gentile and was divorced in 1939. In 1927 he opened his architectural bureau in Brno. 22.3.1942 Troller was deported to Terezín, where he worked in Technical department, and also made interior design for privileged prisoners

arrested and removed from the ghetto. As became known later, they were accused of distributing atrocity propaganda abroad and incarcerated in the **Terezín** Small Fortress which served as a Gestapo prison. Their 'crime' **was** producing drawings documenting different aspects of daily life in the ghetto, such as the search for food, the transports, the elderly, sick and dying. Some of their artwork had been smuggled out of the camp by the former art dealer Leo Strass, while the remainder was hidden. The artists were interrogated by Adolf Eichmann himself. None of them broke their silence. They were tortured. Ferdinand Bloch died in the Small Fortress, while the others were sent to Auschwitz.

That time in **Terezín** nobody knew the details of this story; it was told after the war by Leo Haas<sup>57</sup> and Norbert Troller<sup>58</sup>, the only survivors of the "punishment for art." However, the "artists' affair" **shocked and frightened the inmates**. Naturally Erich had to destroy dangerous evidence - his own truth-revealing cartoons. Eventually, he cut his drawings into pieces, destroyed the captions and his wife hid the shreds in her room in the Hamburg barracks.

### **18. Wulkow**

The Red Cross visit was followed by shooting a fake movie about **the "happy life of Jews in Theresienstadt,"** which also served an inexhaustible topic for **Terezín** wits. Erich, however, was not to see this. A few days before the shooting started, he had received a notice ordering him to be at the Magdeburg barracks on August 25th, at 7.30 a.m. where he would get instructions. "Departure at 12.30 from Langenstrasse, 5. Bring a blanket and a backpack."

55 men and 14 women were sent to Wulkow in Germany, to build a bunker for the SS. The first transport of 200 men had left there on 2.3.1944; at the time Lichtblau received a notice too, but was later taken off the list.

The authorities promised that the families would not be included in transport to the east, and the promise was kept.

By the time Lichtblau arrived there, **the "construction for the Reich"** had been transformed into a zone enclosed by a barbed wire. The foodstuffs and building materials in Wulkow, 30 km from Berlin, were sent from Theresienstadt.

**The camp commander, Obersturmführer SS** Franz Stuschka, a Viennese, was famous for his extreme sadism. Prisoners' memoirs describe the refined harassments to which Stuschka subjected everyone who had the misfortune to fall into his hands when he was in one of his moods.

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and Jewish administrators. 17.7.1944, together with 4 other artists, was framed up in the "artists' affair," incarcerated in Small Fortress, from there to Auschwitz. After a short time as a slave laborer, Troller becomes the kapo Scimanski's private tutor and is assigned to the painters' workshop in a building with the brothel and the museum. This position allows him to observe his environment. While painting kitsch for the SS, Troller also produces an illegal portfolio of paintings and sketches to document camp life. Liberated in January 1945 by the Soviet Army. Until 1948 Troller kept an architectural bureau in Brno, then emigrated to the USA. He documented his experience in a book.

<sup>57</sup> Leo Haas, *The Affair of the Painters of Terezín*, from: Ehrmann František, et al. (eds.), *Terezín*, Prague: The Council of Jewish Communities in the Czech Lands, 1965, pp 157 - 161.

<sup>58</sup> Norbert Troller, *Theresienstadt: Hitler's Gift to the Jews*, The University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

"We were in a labor camp in the middle of an area with many concentration camps. We wore civilian dress.... People weren't hanged or shot -- but they were beaten.

"When, in the woods, one heard the cry 'Leave it!' it meant that Obersturmführer was violently cutting some young guy's hair. Shaving people's heads was merely one of many punishments." (*Leskly's comment*)

Thirty-year-old professional joiner Breuer worked in a carpentry shop. Stuschka monitored Breuer's work closely and by making critical remarks let him know that he, Stuschka, was "the craftsman carpenter" who knew the work perfectly and that Breuer was useless.

Breuer ignored his remarks, and Stuschka punished him. He had a wooden cage made, and Brauer was put into it on a Sunday afternoon in the middle of the Appelplatz<sup>59</sup>. His whole body contorted, Breuer was held in the cage for five solid hours."<sup>60</sup>



Prisoner Breuer in a parrot cage (an SS „joke”)

Knowing **Stuschka's** vile nature, Erich feared that **he wouldn't be able to handle** the job he had, painting buildings, but everything turned out well for him. In Wulkow he continued to draw, which was very dangerous. Tragically, another young artist who was discovered to have a drawing of the camp was sent to Dachau.

**Terezín**ers were accommodated in the so-called French barracks in the middle of a stark sand pit, which was a very bad place to live. The winter 1944/45 was very cold. Although there was an oven and there was no shortage of wood – the place was surrounded by forest – heating was not authorized. Many suffered frostbite on their feet and ears. The thin

<sup>59</sup> Muster area (*Ger.*)

<sup>60</sup> Jindřich Wurm, Terezín Memorial Archive, № 337.

blankets were not warm enough, and early in the morning everyone was woken up for roll-call.

Relatives sent packages **from Terezín**. Elsa Leskly kept an account of what she had sent: fried onions, crackers, sugar. Erich received a message from her in the fall of 1944 about mass deportations from **Terezín** to Poland. Among those deported were also people registered under "Zionist safe-conduct," and even those who had worked in transport management.

By the beginning of February 1945 the Soviet Army was quite close to Berlin. Two hundred and sixteen prisoners were crammed into a cattle car for return to Terezin. There was no water; the only sustenance was ersatz-coffee and a thin slice of bacon. Nine days on the road completely exhausted the prisoners. If not for Elsa's crackers that she had roasted in oil, Erich would hardly have survived the trip. On February 10th, the working crew arrived back in **Terezín**.

### 19. The return

"It was a gray, dead town... It was horrible to see." These words of Leskly's probably explain why only a few of his pictures were dated 1945. The great relief, however, was to meet his wife Elsa, who had cared for him all the time sending him parcels to Wulkow that somehow kept him alive. She survived and saved his dismembered drawings. Maybe that's why the motive of receiving packages is reflected in his last dated cartoons.



Permit –stamp” for 10 kilo packages from friends and relatives..., but only a few got packages



"Shared" joy is a "double" joy, a motto of the package post office on the "permission" stamp (10-kg packages come.); (Not for everybody!)

*Leskly's comment:* –Toward the end, they allowed us to receive packages from Aryan relatives. It was the influence of the Red Cross. I remember that, in March 1945, people received 10-kilogram packages from outside. They came by mail – through the so-called post office. An inscription on the wall said: –Shared pleasure is double pleasure.” People asked those who received packages to share the foodstuffs with them. At the post office, old men watched – they offered to carry a package, for which they expected something in return: –Sir, shall I carry your package?”

About parcels, Erich told another story: “In Terezín there were whole lists of Kohns and Levys – they were extremely common, and they were supposed to receive parcels. But they themselves weren't there any more, they had been deported. In fact, parcels were sent to those who were no longer in this world. There was, for example the popular name Joseph Levy – and if they happened to find a Joseph Levy who had stayed, he received it.”

### Part 3. Hearth and Home, and New Native Land

You want to go home? Are you crazy?  
 The house which you left is the past  
 that has irrevocably disappeared in the maw of time.  
**It's a different** world out there beyond the walls.  
**D'you** hear me? A different world!  
*From Terezin play **Hearth and Home***<sup>61</sup>

On May, 8th, 1945 Terezín was liberated by the Soviet Army.

"As a matter of fact we did not know where to move," Leskly recalled. "I didn't want to go to our home in Ostrava, **nor to Písek**, where we had been on Hachshara. Should we go to Prague?"

While the Lichtblaus hesitated, a typhus epidemic broke out in Terezín and quarantine was declared. On May, 30th, 1945, on their wedding anniversary, they finally reached Prague. All hotels had been occupied by Russian military.

**"We entered one hotel and presented ourselves: two from Terezín. They found us a room in no time. Next day we applied at the Repatriation Service. They sent us to a rest home... And what's more, we were given 500 crowns each."**

After war the Lichtblaus changed their name to Leskly. **"In Písek, we felt uncomfortable with a German surname. The Czechs couldn't pronounce it properly."**

Having returned, they dug out the things they had buried in a front garden before departing on their transport. The box with family photographs was unharmed, only some pictures were damaged.

**Life after the war was hard, especially when the Lesklys' two children were born.**

"With great difficulty we managed to get an apartment in **Písek**. ... Soon I started to work on a closely related specialty – producing wooden dolls. I then got a window-dressing job but it did not last long, since it was a small town. Then I once again looked for a job and found it in Teplitz-**Schönau**, in Sudeten, whence the Germans had been expatriated after the war."

Erich Leskly worked in the Jepa shopping center from 1947 to 1949. Meanwhile the political situation changed – in 1948, the communists seized power in Czechoslovakia. Large portraits of Stalin and Gottwald went up everywhere, even a grocery store window display **couldn't do without them. State security** checked. To get a job, one needed to get a certificate of loyalty to the ruling party from the security authorities. The same was required in order to leave the country.

"I worked at Jepa with one person who had a clearly Czech name. We got along perfectly, but then it turned out that he had been in the SA. They found a photo of him in an SA uniform. Somehow it had been hushed up, however, it got on my nerves. (Emigration was

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<sup>61</sup> Zdeněk Eliáš, Jiří Stein Dým Domova, Lisa Peschel, ed., *Divadelní texty z terezínského ghetta (Theatrical Texts from the Terezín Ghetto)*, Akropolis, 2008, p. 211.

already in full swing at the time.) I told him: 'My dear friend, I don't wish to work with you any more. It's either you or me.' So he remained and I left.

"The night the state of Israel was declared, we had a party... The shaliach<sup>62</sup> from the Sohnut,<sup>63</sup> as I remember, told us: 'Jews have gone through terrible times... It's not easy to build the future here on a cemetery.' Europe really seemed to be a Jewish cemetery at that time."

"Czechoslovakia was my native land but for my children it won't be any more."

"Here [in Israel] I've had some difficult years since my wife was very sick, and I didn't work in my trade. But gradually things have sorted themselves out and there is a 'happy end.'"

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<sup>62</sup> Envoy (*Heb.*).

<sup>63</sup> The Jewish Agency (*Heb.*).