

**THUS WE
REMEMBER**

**CONTINUING THE STORY OF OUR
HOLOCAUST TORAH
FROM THE
DESTROYED JEWISH COMMUNITY OF
D'VŮR KRÁLOVÉ**

Temple Sholom of West Essex
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Cedar Grove, New Jersey



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Thus We Remember: A Memorial to the Jewish Community of Dvůr Králové and the Story of One of Its Torah Scrolls, written by Naomi Patz and Rabbi Norman Patz, was published on Yom HaShoah 5765 (May 2005) on the 50th anniversary of Temple Sholom of West Essex and the 30th anniversary of the congregation receiving the Torah in permanent trust from the Memorial Scrolls Trust in London.

This addendum, published in draft form for the 60th anniversary of the congregation, the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the liberation of the concentration camps, is an update of events and information relative to the scroll. There is some repetition of information (and even of phrasing) in the documents we have included here; it was unavoidable in order to retain the integrity of the original documents; we have tried to minimize it and trust the reader's patience.

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Temple Sholom of West Essex is honored to be part of the network of congregations maintained by the Memorial Scrolls Trust ("parents" of our Holocaust scroll). We encourage you to visit the Trust's website at www.memorialscrollstrust.org. You will find a great deal of information about the Trust's history and mission as well as an invitation to visit the Memorial Scrolls Trust Museum, located in the Westminster Synagogue in London.

Dedicated to the memory of

EVA NOSKOVÁ

the last Jew in Dvůr Králové, who died in March, 2015 after a long illness

and to the memory of

JIRÍ FIEDLER

**chronicler extraordinaire of the Jewish communities of Bohemia and Moravia,
who died tragically in January, 2015 together with his wife, Dagmar, victims of
a thief who broke in to rob their home.**

The memory of the righteous is a blessing.



The monument on the site of the destroyed synagogue in Dvůr Králové



The 2008 Confirmation class, siblings, parents and grandparents, with Rabbi Norman and Naomi Patz at the dedication of the monument

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MESSAGE FROM RABBI GROFFMAN

In the aftermath of the *Shoah*, people often ask, “Where was God as six million Jews were murdered, as well as six million other people whom the Nazis also deemed subhuman? What kind of God allows such horrors to occur?”

We have been wrestling with the issue of theodicy, i.e., God’s justice, since the days of the Hebrew Bible—just read the Book of Job, for example. Through the centuries, people have offered a variety of responses to this question—ranging from the notion that we cannot understand God’s ways to positing that suffering is punishment for sin—but ultimately, of course, no one really knows why the innocent suffer.

There is at least one thing we do know, however—we can control our response to the terrible things that transpire in the world. In the face of evil, we affirm the good. In the shadow of the death of six million Jews, whom the Nazis wanted to obliterate from existence and human memory, we Jews remember them.

Rabbi Norman and Naomi Patz’s book, *Thus We Remember*, is a *mitzvah*—a sacred deed. Through the tremendous work they have done over the last several decades creating a relationship between our congregation and the community of Dvůr Králové, the Patzes have helped perpetuate the memory of the members of that destroyed Jewish community who perhaps otherwise may have been forgotten.

It is overwhelming to contemplate remembering six million people; but we can remember one community at a time, one person at a time. Temple Sholom, thanks to Rabbi and Naomi Patz, does this at every *Bat/Bar Mitzvah* service, when our students read from D’vůr Králové’s Torah scroll, of which we are the permanent custodians. We do this by reading this book which they have so expertly composed. And we do this by working to create the type of world that is the antithesis of the Nazis’ world—a world of compassion and justice.

I, and I know all who read *Thus We Remember* and will read the Addendum are grateful to the Patzes for the holy work they have done in helping us all remember.

Zichronam Livracha—May the memory of our martyrs be a blessing.

Rabbi Laurence W. Groffman
Temple Sholom of West Essex

FOREWORD

Ten years ago, when we published *Thus We Remember*, the monograph about our Holocaust Torah and the former Jewish community of Dvůr Králové in the Czech Republic, we had the sense of a mission completed: The Torah scroll, beautifully ornamented, occupied a central place in the ark in our sanctuary; I told the story of the scroll at bar and bat mitzvah services and everyone who came to services regularly knew the entire story; our b'nei mitzvah read from this scroll to chant their portions; it was displayed to the congregation every Shabbat and on festivals; each week we included in our yahrzeit list two of the 111 names then known to us of the Jewish citizens of Dvůr Králové who had been murdered in the Nazi death camps; the entire list was featured on a special page in our annual Book of Memory. We had no expectation of further developments.

But dramatic developments came about. Just a glance at the Table of Contents of this addendum to the original monograph reveals the next chapters in the continuing story of this scroll – and of our congregation. The documents, descriptions and photographs contained here are suffused with the intensity and power of what the members of Temple Sholom of West Essex have experienced – and continue to experience – as we pursue our sacred work of honoring the memory of the martyrs of our people.

Through this Torah scroll, we make ourselves their spiritual heirs, and we make their memory – the memory of the Jews of Dvůr Králové and the greater memory of all of the Jews whose lives were destroyed in the Shoah – a blessing.

Norman R. Patz, Rabbi Emeritus
Temple Sholom of West Essex

DEDICATING THE MONUMENT

The idea of building a monument on the site of the “Tempel,” the destroyed synagogue of Dvůr Králové, first emerged in 2005 when Naomi and Rabbi Patz met for the first time with then-mayor Jiří Rain. This letter describes an unexpected event that accelerated the realization of the project.

I.

LETTER FROM RABBI PATZ TO THE CONGREGATION, OCTOBER 2005

At the late morning service on Rosh Hashanah, our Holocaust Torah fell out of the Torah holder onto the floor of the *bimah*. It happened while the *haftarah* was being read. The guests on that side of the *bimah* and I quickly picked up the scroll and embraced it. I gave the scroll to Richard Stern to hold until it came time to return the Torah to the ark.

The Torah scrolls are the most precious, holiest objects in the sanctuary. We rise when the Torah is taken from the ark; we touch the Torah with a *tallit* or prayer book and then kiss the place that has touched the scroll. A dropped Torah is a shocking sight (and a sickening sound), especially for those of us who have seen Holocaust-era photographs of desecrated synagogues, and it is particularly upsetting because of this Torah scroll’s provenance.

But accidents do happen, and rabbinic authorities over the last 500 years have explored ways to “atone” for such an accident. The prevailing notion derived from these sources is that the person who drops a scroll – and everyone who witnessed it – must fast for 40 days (matching the 40 days Moses spent on Mount Sinai receiving the Torah). Of course, the forty days were never intended to be consecutive (Judaism is a religion that values the sanctity of life!), and the sources provide alternative actions, but all agree that everyone who witnesses the desecration, however inadvertent, must do something.

In our case, no one actually dropped the scroll; it was probably jostled by the vibrations of so many people on the *bimah* for that wonderful fifth *aliyah*. But all of us who were in the sanctuary were “witnesses.”

It is important to understand that this “something” is a *custom*; it is not *halakhah* (Jewish law). Some scholars suggest a one-day fast. Many authorities suggest a gift of *zedakah* in addition to or as an appropriate substitute for fasting.

(The issue is discussed in Solomon Freehof’s book, *Contemporary Reform Responsa*, 1974, pp. 117-120; you can also look it up on the Internet.)

The Ritual Committee and I have weighed the options and determined a course of action that we believe will be appropriately respectful, penitent and educational:

1. On a Sunday later in the fall we will hold a Torah “event.” It will start with a symposium on Jewish Torah “etiquette” and respect for books.

2. The presentation will mark the beginning of a morning-to-evening fast that I personally will undertake, and I invite others – especially eye witnesses, including all of you who were present in the sanctuary at that time as well as every member of the congregation who has a special feeling for this scroll – to join me in fasting until dark. It is important that we have at least a *minyan* of people participating in the event (10 adults – male and/or female). We'll gather again in the early evening for a light break-the-fast supper.
3. We will establish a *tzedakah* fund to help create a memorial in Dvůr Králové. We have already initiated discussions with the mayor there about putting a monument in place at the site of the destroyed synagogue and a marker at the site of what remains of the cemetery. Our idea now is to make amends for the Torah scroll's fall by adding to the proposed Dvůr Králové monument a plaque that will include a listing of the names of all the Jewish citizens of the town who were murdered during the Holocaust.

To this end, we invite contributions of *hai* – \$18 – or more from every member of the congregation. Checks should be sent to Temple Sholom of West Essex and earmarked for the Dvůr Králové Memorial. Finally, I invite everyone who would like to participate in the planning of the Torah event and in our plans for other ways to honor this Torah scroll to call Larry Steinman, Ritual Committee Chair.

G'mar hatimah tovah – May we all be sealed in the Book of Life for a good year.

II.

TORAH SYMPOSIUM AND FAST

On Sunday morning, November 27th, we gathered for a Torah symposium on the theme “Jewish Respect for the Torah and Books.” The presenters were Rabbi Bernard Zlotowitz, who spoke on “The Sacredness of the Torah,” Mark Lefkowitz, whose topic was “The People of the Book,” and Rabbi Patz, who addressed the topic “This Scroll in Trust.” The symposium drew a large number of people and the session, intended to run for an hour, lasted much longer because of the lively nature of the discussion.

Many people who attended and others who were not able to participate in the symposium chose to fast for the day, and nearly 100 people joined together at 7:00 p.m. for the bagels-and-lox break-fast sponsored by the Ritual Committee.

Members of the congregation contributed so generously to the special *tzedakah* fund for creating the memorial in Dvůr Králové that we were able to complete our share of the costs involved in realizing the project.

An unhappy, traumatic event thus led to the fulfillment of a mitzvah – but it is not a fundraising method we would ever like to experience again.

III.

THE DEDICATION OF THE MONUMENT IN D'VŮR KRÁLOVÉ

Message By Rabbi Patz In the April 2008 Shofar, the monthly bulletin of Temple Shalom of West Essex

Our Confirmation class visit to Dvůr Králové on a bitterly cold February 16th was the completion of a mission to memorialize the Jewish citizens of Dvůr Králové who were deported and murdered during the Holocaust. The mission started in 1975 when we received on permanent loan a Torah scroll from the Memorial Scrolls Trust in London. The small scroll, we were told, came from a town in northeastern Bohemia where Jews had been leaders in textile manufacturing, and 111 of them had been murdered by the Nazis. In 1975, during the Communist years, that was all the information we were able to learn about the Jewish community of Dvůr Králové nad Labem.

But we did know how this Torah scroll from Dvůr Králové got to the Westminster Synagogue in London. When the Nazis completed their takeover of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, just six months after the infamous Munich conference, they confiscated all Jewish properties, including synagogues. They started gathering the ritual objects and had them sent to Prague to form the basis of a museum. To this day, no one can adequately explain how or why the decision to amass these Jewish ritual items – Torah scrolls, silver Torah ornaments, embroidered curtains for the Holy Ark, and other ritual objects – was made. (See page 45 of *Thus We Remember*.) In all of the other countries that the Nazis invaded and conquered, they plundered the synagogues and used the buildings as stables or storehouses or as assembly points for Jews about to be murdered onsite or deported to the death camps in Poland. Yet, in Prague, a collection of nearly 200,000 ritual objects was assembled and catalogued under Nazi supervision.

With the end of World War II, few Czech Jewish communities could be reconstituted so the treasures became the property of the Jewish Museum in Prague. After the Communist coup in 1948, all the Czech museums, including the Jewish Museum, were nationalized. In 1962, the Czech Communist authorities, looking for Western cash, sold the 1,564 Torah scrolls in the museum's collection to Eric Estorick, an English art collector, who contributed them to what became known as the Memorial Scrolls Trust, located in the Westminster Synagogue in London. The Trust conserved the scrolls and then started lending them in permanent trust to synagogues around the world to help keep alive the memory of the Jewish communities that had been destroyed.

When our congregation applied to the Trust for one of these Torah scrolls, Dr. Samuel Portugal, who funded the acquisition, had two requests: that the scroll be small in size, so that children could hold it without difficulty, and that it be a kosher scroll, fit for ritual use, for reading the word of God in public worship services. The scroll that best suited our needs came from the destroyed "Tempel" in Dvůr Králové.

Since 1975, every young person who becomes a bar/bat mitzvah in the congregation reads from "our" Dvůr Králové scroll. And until my retirement in 2006, at each of these

ceremonies I told the story of the scroll's journey. Part of the story was a description of how the Dvůr Králové synagogue had been demolished in 1966 to make way for a new highway, and how the cemetery had been desecrated and left in ruins. I described the life of the Jews who once thrived there, and how the Nazis deported and murdered them during the Holocaust years. I spoke about how we were honoring the memory of these innocent martyrs – the men, the women and the children – by reading God's words from their scroll.

But until the Velvet Revolution, we did not know their names. The Communist government refused to help us find that information. So even though we were remembering the Jews of Dvůr Králové as a group, we did not know them as individuals. We did not know them by name. These victims died twice! The oldest among them died in transit or in the Terezín Ghetto; the others were murdered by the Nazis in Auschwitz-Birkenau, in Treblinka, in Maly Trostinec, in Dachau and Flossenburg.

And they died again when the Communists suppressed their memory.

When democracy returned to the Czech Republic, a new spirit of openness and cooperation began. Now, we know their names. When we read the names of our family members who have died, we also include in our kaddish list the names of the Jews of Dvůr Králové who were killed in the Holocaust.

And we wrote a monograph – *Thus We Remember* – that tells the history of the Jews of the Czech Lands, and how Jews came and settled in Dvůr Králové and became active in the textile industry that was so important to that city. They created a Jewish community, self-help organizations and a cemetery, and in 1892 built a beautiful synagogue. Its dome joined the spires of the churches in dominating the skyline of the town.

The Confirmation class students who came to Dvůr Králové for the dedication ceremony and many of their parents had read from the Dvůr Králové scroll and all of them knew the story well. They had heard the names of the deportees and they had seen the drawings done secretly at Terezín by three Jewish children from Dvůr Králové: Petr Hellman, age 9, Marianna Schonova, age 10, and Ota Hammerschlag, age 11. All of us who came to the dedication had a sense of personal involvement in this history. My daughter Debby, who was with us when we got the Torah scroll at the Westminster Synagogue when she was nine years old, joined us in Dvůr Králové with her own two daughters, Natasha and India, [then] ages ten and six.

The idea of building a monument on the site of the synagogue first came up when Naomi and I visited Dvůr Králové in 2005 and presented a copy of the monograph to then-mayor Jiří Rain. He showed us the location of the synagogue on old town plans and took us to see where the synagogue had stood. We spoke about erecting a small memorial there. That conversation started a process that led to a partnership between our congregation and the municipality of Dvůr Králové, the commissioning of Ota Černý to sculpt the monument that his late father had designed, and the actual placing of the Star of David monument where the entrance doors of the synagogue once stood.



Ota Černý came to meet with us in New York, after which we continued to share plans for the monument by e-mail. It was Ota who told us about Eva Weiss Nosková, who survived the war in England and returned with her parents to Dvůr Králové a few months after liberation. In 1965-66, her father had tried desperately but ineffectively to have the synagogue saved from destruction (see pages 46-47 of *Thus We Remember*). Mrs. Nosková, who had read our monograph, shared with us names that were missing from the list of deportees. She also offered to help arrange the dedication ceremony. I was also in contact with Dušan Kubica, representing Rain's successor, Mayor Lukes, to finalize the financial aspects of erecting the monument and securing municipal support for its maintenance and security.

Even with all the planning and envisioning of virtually every detail, we could not have imagined how emotional the ceremony would be! It was so moving to see the local scouts – adults and youngsters – lined up in their uniforms as an honor guard for the Czech, US and Israeli flags. The singing of the anthems by the assembly, led by the Czech school children who had learned *Hatikvah*, the anthem of the Jewish people and of Israel, was thrilling! The speeches by the three Christian ministers, praising the monument and warning of the dangers of extremism and totalitarianism, were inspiring. The personal reminiscences by Mrs. Nosková gave the ceremony a unique dimension; letters from the Czech Ambassador to the US, the US Ambassador to the Czech Republic and the Executive Vice President of the Jewish Federation of the Czech Republic provided an official international flavor.

We are grateful to the many, many citizens of Dvůr Králové who braved the cold weather to be at the dedication and to those who brought flowers and lit candles on the site on the anniversary of Kristallnacht. We are acutely aware that many of those who attended and participated in the ceremony suffered severely – first at the hands of the Nazis and then under Communism. It is clear that the people of Dvůr Králové and the members of our congregation are together in determining to remember our past accurately and to building on its basis a future that will be worthy of the legacy of Thomas Garrigue Masaryk: democracy and justice. That is our true mission and the monument is its symbol.

A version of this article, entitled "Completing a Mission," appeared in the May/June 2008 issue of *Martyrdom and Resistance*.



Ota Černý supervising the construction and installation of the Star of David

IV.

D'VAR TORAH

Delivered by Rabbi Patz on Erev Shabbat, February 15, 2008 at Bejt Praha, the congregation whose worship services are held in the historic Spanish Synagogue in Prague

In this week's parashah, the subject of the text is the High Priest Aaron and the elaborate clothing he was to wear when he came before God in worship. For me, the most fascinating article of Aaron's costume is the *hoshen*, the breast-piece. It was a flat box, 25 cm square, made of gold, tied to Aaron's shoulder straps and to his belt. Aaron was to put the *urim* and *tummim* inside this box. We have no idea today what those were; some say these mysterious objects served as an oracle to help Aaron make decisions. While they are a mystery to us, there is no mystery in the other instruction about this box of solid gold: "Aaron shall carry the names of the children of Israel on the breast-piece of decision over his heart, when he enters the sanctuary, for remembrance before God at all times." (Sh'mot/Exodus 28:29)

What an important idea! Aaron was to carry the names of the 12 tribes of Israel – *ahl libo* – on his heart – at all times! That is how he served God, by having his people – all of them, by name – in his heart. They were not a faceless mass, but individuals, people with names!

In 1975, when our congregation got one of the Holocaust scrolls from the Memorial Scrolls Trust in London, we were told that it came from Dvůr Králové nad Labem, but we were not able to learn anything further about the Jews of the town, not even the names of any of the Jewish men, women and children who had lived in Dvůr Králové before the Nazis deported them to Terezín and from there to the death camps. The government had the names but they had no interest in releasing them.

Why was that? I believe that the names of individuals were not important to the Communist regime. Individualism was a capitalist sin. The desires of individuals had to be submerged for the common good. Everyone had to make sacrifices for the future – a future we now know was never coming.

The suppression of names by totalitarian regimes like that of the Communists is the exact opposite of the Torah teaching. In the Torah, the High Priest was required to keep the names of his people *ahl libo* – on his heart – *l'zikaron*, as a reminder, *tamid*, at all times.

Obviously, most of us don't think individual desires always or automatically override society's needs; that would create chaos and anarchy. But it is clear to us now that when even one innocent individual is mistreated by a government, no one is safe at any time.

It was only with the collapse of the Communist regime that the Jewish Museum was able to provide us with names and information about the fate of the 111 Jewish citizens of Dvůr Králové – men, women and children – who had been murdered during the Holocaust and once we knew who they were we could write about them, we could say kaddish for them by

name, we could remember them, we could prevent them from being murdered a second time, which is what was happening during the Communist years because their names, their memory, their very existence were being erased.

We wrote a book about the Jewish community of Dvůr Králové, which led to the event in which the members of my synagogue who are here with me and I are going to participate tomorrow: the dedication of a monument, a *magen david* nearly 3 meters high, on the site of the demolished synagogue of Dvůr Králové. For this ceremony, we will be joining residents of Dvůr Králové, including the mayor and members of the Council, priests and ministers, children from the Dvůr Králové schools, the scouts, and the one Jewish survivor of the small number who came back to live in the town.

Last week I spoke to this woman. Her name is Eva Nosková. During our conversation she told me a very moving story. After the monument was erected at the beginning of November, from the evening of November 9th and through the day on November 10th, the anniversary of Kristallnacht, at least 50 lighted candles and many bouquets of flowers were placed on the monument. Mrs. Nosková has no idea who put them there. She had been worried, she said, that there might be swastikas. Instead, memorials – individual tributes in this town in which she is the only remaining Jew.

Because of the respect and honor we have given to our Torah scroll from the destroyed Jewish community of Dvůr Králové, because we have made the names of those forgotten Jews so much a part of our lives at Temple Sholom of West Essex in Cedar Grove, New Jersey, we began the process that led to the creation of the monument we will dedicate tomorrow. We are helping tell the truth to a new generation. The monument is a witness to the darkest time in our people's history, but it is also an affirmation both of the Jewish role in Czech life and of the absolute virtue of democracy, where every individual has a name, names which good leaders should always keep in their hearts – always. Amen.



Interior of the Spanish Synagogue in Prague

V.

DEDICATING THE MONUMENT

On February 16, 2008, a bitter cold day, Rabbi Norman and Naomi Patz, that year's confirmands and many of their parents and grandparents joined dignitaries and members of the town of Dvůr Králové to dedicate a memorial to the Jews of Dvůr Králové nad Labem who were murdered in the Holocaust. The memorial was erected on the site of the town's destroyed synagogue with funds jointly contributed by our congregation and the Dvůr Králové municipality. Rabbi Patz's remarks at that ceremony were reprinted in the version below as the Holocaust memorial page in our congregation's 2008/5769 Memorial Book under the annual rubric "In Memory of the Six Million and All Those Who Gave Their Lives to Sanctify God's Name."

We have gathered here together to perform an act of remembering that is long overdue, an act that makes a contribution to the future of democracy here in Dvůr Králové, in the Czech Republic and, indeed, in the whole world. Civilization itself stands on two pillars – memory and truth. Today, we affirm our shared commitment to those key values.

For over thirty years, our congregation in New Jersey has been hearing the word of God read to us from a Torah scroll that came from this town, a Hebrew scroll containing the

Five Books of Moses that was read as a central feature of Sabbath prayers in the synagogue that stood where we are standing today. The students who have come here from New Jersey each read from that scroll when they became bar and bat mitzvah, the ceremony that takes place when a Jewish child turns 13 years old. Each time we read from this Torah scroll, I would speak about how it came to



our congregation in New Jersey. In my talk, I described the Jewish community that had thrived here in Dvůr Králové, and how the Nazis deported and murdered them during the Holocaust years. I would speak about how we were honoring the memory of these innocent martyrs – the men, the women and the children – by reading God's words from their scroll. But until the Velvet Revolution, I could not name them because we did not know their names. The Communist government refused to help us find that information. So even though we were remembering them as a group, we did not know them as individuals; we did not know them by name. These victims died twice! The oldest among them died during the deportations or in Terezín; the others were murdered by the Nazis in the death camps of Auschwitz-Birkenau and Treblinka, and in Maly Trostinec, Dachau and Flossenburg. And they died again when the Communists suppressed their memory.

When democracy returned to the Czech Republic, a new spirit of openness and cooperation began. We learned the names of the Jews of Dvůr Králové, and now we include them in our memorial prayers along with the names of our own family members who have died. They are together in our hearts. And we wrote a book about them – a book that tells the history of the Jews of the Czech Lands, and about how Jews came and settled here in Dvůr Králové and became active in the textile industry that was so important to this city. They created a

Jewish community, self-help organizations and a cemetery, and in 1890 built a beautiful synagogue. The dome of the synagogue and the spires of the churches together dominated the skyline of the town. The synagogue – empty since the Holocaust – was demolished by the Communist government in 1966 to make way for a new road.

Now the citizens of Dvůr Králové and the congregation of Temple Sholom of West Essex have joined together to honor the memory of the Jews of Dvůr Králové. This monument, created by a talented young sculptor, Ota Černý, helps to fill in a missing piece in the history of Dvůr Králové. It enables us to remember what happened here and throughout Europe. It enables us to remember where we have come from and guides us – people of all faiths and nations – as we turn from a yesterday filled with pain and suffering toward a better tomorrow. We pray that the future will be a time of harmony, democracy and peace, a time when – as the prophet Isaiah said – “They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war anymore.”

We dedicate this monument in reverent memory of Dvůr Králové’s Jewish citizens. We pray to God, the Eternal Father of us all: May their souls be bound up in the bonds of eternal life.



The word “remember” in Czech, Hebrew and English is carved into the base of the Star of David. The text on the plaque at the base of the monument is in Czech and English. It reads:

Here stood the Dvůr Králové nad Labem Synagogue dedicated in 1890,
abandoned after the Holocaust and finally demolished in 1966.
In memory of the Jewish citizens of Dvůr Králové nad Labem
who were deported and murdered by the Nazi regime
during the Holocaust years 1939-1945.
May they rest in peace.

VI.

**GREETINGS FROM THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC,
READ AT THE DEDICATION CEREMONY BY THE LIAISON OFFICER OF THE EMBASSY**



EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
PRAGUE

OFFICE OF THE AMBASSADOR

February 16, 2008

Mr. Norman R. Patz
Rabbi Emeritus
Temple Sholom of West Essex
Cedar Grove, New Jersey

Dear Rabbi Patz, dear Mayor Lukeš, distinguished guests:

I would like to extend my sincere greetings to all of you on the occasion of the dedication of this wonderful monument commemorating the site of the Dvur Kralove Synagogue.

On behalf of the U.S. Embassy and the American people, I would also like to pay our deepest respect to the Jewish citizens of Dvur Kralove who perished in the Holocaust. This monument stands as a reminder of their human suffering, as well as a moving artistic symbol of an epochal tragedy that will never be forgotten.

My sincere thanks go to Rabbi Patz, who has been instrumental in this endeavor, and to the Municipality of Dvur Kralove, which has been a dedicated partner in this effort. Their joint commitment is a tribute to the spirit of remembrance and mutual understanding that unites Czechs and Americans of all faiths and backgrounds.

Please accept my best wishes for the future of this relationship.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard W. Graber".

Richard W. Graber

VII.

REMARKS BY EVA WEISS NOSKOVÁ AT THE DEDICATION OF THE HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL ON THE SITE OF THE DESTROYED SYNAGOGUE IN DVŮR KRÁLOVÉ NAD LABEM, FEBRUARY 16, 2008/10 ADAR I, 5768



Dear Rabbi and Mrs. Patz, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Young Friends:

I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to welcome all of you on the occasion of the consecration of the Star of David monument here at the place of the demolished Jewish synagogue. My English is not perfect, but I hope you'll understand what I want to tell you.

I'm going to start by talking about events of many years ago. In 1850, the first Jewish settlers came to our town. No Jews had been allowed to live here before 1850. They began immediately to create a Jewish community. By 1885, they had built a cemetery and, in 1890, the synagogue, which was consecrated in 1891. They started to build the first textile factories for weaving, dyeing and printing cotton fabrics and jute. They achieved such great success in the textile industry that very soon our town was called the "Czech Manchester."

The Jewish community was quite large. In 1910, there were more than 500 registered members. But by 1930, the number had fallen to 300. As had begun to happen around the country, the synagogue service, which had been in Hebrew and German, now started to be read in Hebrew and Czech, and the German Jewish families – unhappy with this change – moved to other places.

The Jewish families and their textile factories made the town a glorious place. Dvůr Králové became widely known not only in Czechoslovakia but across Europe and overseas. But that was before 1938-1939. When Hitler occupied the Republic, all the Jewish factories were seized by the Germans and the Jewish shops were closed or "Aryanized." The Jews were discriminated against and were no longer allowed to take part in the public life of the town. They had to wear a Jewish star, visible on their clothing, to show that they were Jewish. In the end, in 1941-1942, the Jews were dragged away to concentration camps: first to Terezín and then, after selection, to other camps – Oświęcim/Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka, Dachau, Buchenwald, Mauthausen and others. Most of them were murdered in gas chambers. The Jewish children were sent to the death camps with their parents. None

of them survived. Only the mixed marriage families, who were deported to concentration camps in 1944-1945, survived the war.

The decline of the Jewish community of Dvůr Králové started before World War II and continued after the war because only a few of the small number of Jews who survived came back home. And the survivors very soon decided to leave, to move abroad and start a new life in another country – Australia, England, Canada, the USA, Ireland. The continuity vanished.



The synagogue was demolished in the 1960s. Despite efforts, led by my father, to preserve the building and declare it a national monument, it was not possible to save it. The town leaders, Communists of course, decided to pull it down and a new road – this road in front of us – was built right through the site of the synagogue.

Our Jewish cemetery was vandalized and almost completely destroyed. Today there is only a small memorial, created out of a few remaining gravestones. It is a sad but interesting fact that the synagogue and the cemetery survived both world wars only to be destroyed by the Communist regime.

We are here today, standing on the site of the demolished synagogue, and now there is a Star of David memorial to commemorate all the Jewish citizens of Dvůr Králové who once took part in the life of our town and were then murdered in concentration camps. Thank you to those who lit candles and brought flowers to the monument on the anniversary of Kristallnacht, and to all those who helped prepare for this day.

Finally, I am proud that I can say: Yes, I live among people who care about me and the fate of my community, and I hope that this site will stay a sacred place not only for today but forever.

VIII.

AZKARAH

Note from Naomi Patz: On March 28 (2015), we received a sad email from Ota Černý, the sculptor of the monument, to tell us that, after a brave, protracted struggle, Eva Nosková had finally succumbed to the cancer that had been slowly destroying her body. Numbers of confirmands who traveled with us to Prague and Amsterdam over the years had a chance to meet Eva, not only the lucky group who participated in the dedication of the memorial but also those whom Eva came and met with in Prague during our visits, despite her increasing frailty. We were an important connection for her: a guarantee that the victims of the Holocaust would be remembered by people who had not themselves experienced the horror of the Shoah. Ota shared with us the eulogy delivered by her daughters:

OUR MEMORIES OF EVA NOSKOVÁ
BY JANA MICHAELA BENOVÁ AND IVANA CERNA

Our town lost a major personality when our mother, Eva Nosková, died on March 11th. We all feel a profound sense of emptiness. Eva was born on the 20th of August, 1936 to a prominent Jewish family. Her father, Robert Weiss, was proprietor of the factory Weiss & Sons (today JUTA 1). Eva was not even three years old when the Second World War began. The family fled to England where her father served in the Czechoslovak army in Great Britain as a tankist. Her mother worked for the International Red Cross caring for lonely children who had been sent to England on the Kindertransports without their parents, and Eva started attending school. Her father returned to Czechoslovakia with the army in May, 1945. Eva and her mother came back in November on a train operated by the Belgian Red Cross. They discovered that all the other members of our family had been murdered in concentration camps. All of their property had been seized by the Germans; later, it was nationalized by the Communists. The Weiss family was never able to recover any of it.



Since our grandfather was Jewish, the former owner of a factory, and had been a member of a “foreign” [Czech-in-exile but not Communist] army, he was an undesirable person to the new regime. He was degraded and persecuted in a variety of ways. Nor did the Communists forget about Eva. They did what they could to keep her from getting a proper formal education. Nevertheless, she was determined and resourceful, and ultimately she completed her studies at a teachers’ institute. But the regime continued to punish her for being her father’s daughter and she was sent to teach in the borderlands of the Karlovarsko region, a very undesirable teaching assignment. A few years later, after her mother died, she returned to live in Dvůr Králové. She was not allowed to teach here either, so at various times she worked in a foundry, in a brick factory, and also as a gas station attendant. Only after the revolution, in 1989, when there was a sudden need for English teachers, was she able to get a job in a local grammar school and then in the elementary school Schulzovy sady, where she taught until 2003.

Despite the fact that fate was very cruel to her and her family, she never came to hate her life and never got embittered. Just as her parents had done, she too tried to enjoy her nice moments and to overcome those that were bad. In 2007, Eva helped arrange for the creation of a monument on the site of the demolished synagogue. At the very place where once there was an entrance to the synagogue, there is now a Star of David and a memorial plaque.

Since 2007, she has pushed for the establishment of a beautiful memorial on the grounds of what was once a beautiful Jewish cemetery. She founded an organization, called Civil Association, devoted to realizing this goal. The Association has been working to collect money to create the memorial. She really wanted to live to see this project become a reality. We hope that the money to build the memorial will be raised in her memory so that her final dream can be fulfilled.

THE CEMETERY PROJECT



On page 48 of *Thus We Remember*, Naomi Patz described the Dvůr Králové cemetery as follows: “It is a rectangular plot at the corner of two small roads. Although the cemetery was once surrounded by a wall, no sign of it remains. The mortuary hall and columbarium are totally gone. Vestiges of the ceremonial entrance gate are still standing, as are a number of tombstones in incredibly dilapidated condition.” The fragments of many other tombstones “have been piled in a rough cairn against a tree” as a makeshift memorial.

The following technical information about the cemetery was provided to us many years ago by Jiří Fiedler. It comes from his work for the International Jewish Cemetery Project of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies. Fiedler traveled all over then-Czechoslovakia on a bicycle recording the condition of synagogues that were mostly deserted or were already being used for secondary purposes because no Jews had returned from the war to reclaim the buildings and see to the upkeep of the cemeteries. Fiedler was not Jewish; he was associated with the Jewish Museum of Prague and, at his death, was well on the way to completing a massive compilation of information about all of the Jewish communities in the country.

DVUR KRALOVE NAD LABEM

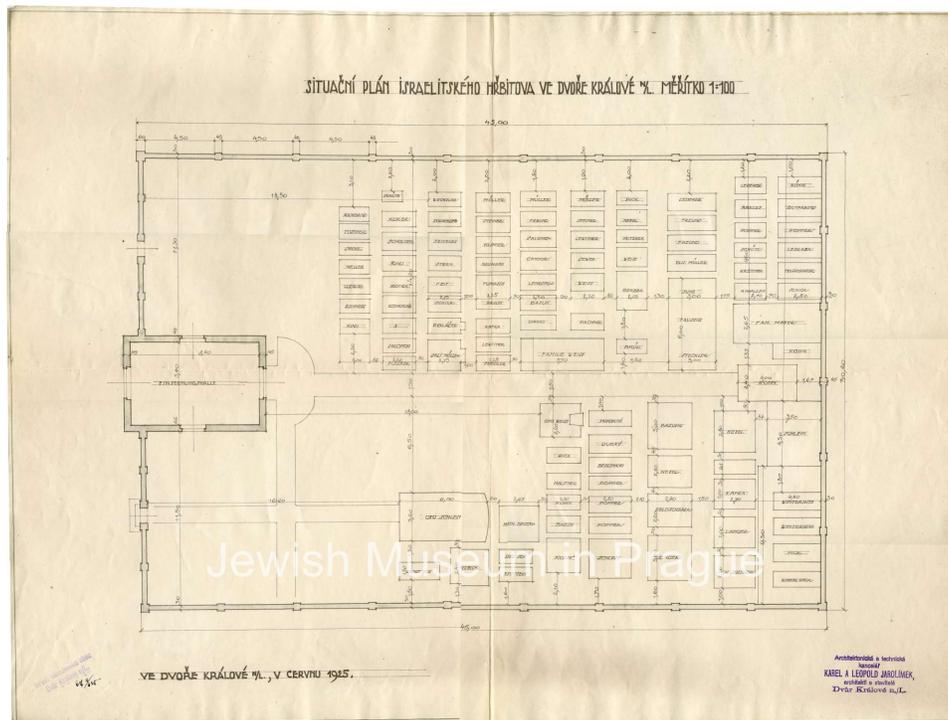
... is located in the Bohemia, Trutnov region at 50°26'15"49, about 23 km N of Hradec Kralove, 23 km W of Nachod and 31 km E of Jicin. The cemetery is located 1100 meters NNW of the main square, at the corner of Spojených Narodů Street and Stitneho Street. Present town population is 15,000-25,000 with no Jews. [At that point, Fiedler was not aware of the existence of Eva Nosková.] ... Earliest known Jewish community was 1862. In 1848, Jews were permitted to settle here. Peak Jewish population was early in the 20th century. In 1930, Jewish population was 182. Famous sculptor Otto Gutfreund (1889-1927) lived here. The Conservative or Progressive Jewish cemetery originated between 1883 and 1885. Founders of the local textile industry were buried in the cemetery, which does not have landmark status, with last known Jewish burial before 1943. The urban flat isolated site has no sign or marker. Reached off a public road, access is open to all via no wall, fence, or gate. The size of cemetery before WWII and now is 0.1329 ha. 1-100 gravestones, none in original location and about 25%-50% toppled or broken, date from the late 19th-20th centuries. Stones removed from the cemetery are perhaps conserved in a museum or sold or stolen. The granite, limestone and sandstone tombstones, flat shaped stones or multi-stone monuments have Hebrew, German and Czech inscriptions. A [makeshift] memorial in the cemetery is made of the remaining tombstones. Praha Jewish community owns the property now used as a Jewish cemetery and a park. Adjacent properties are recreational, gardens, and residential. Private visitors and local residents visit frequently as a park. The cemetery was devastated in 1945-1947. After 1959, the Jewish congregation liquidated it. Tombstones were removed and columbarium walls pulled down. Local municipal authorities and Jewish groups erected the memorial in 1960. From time to time authorities clear or clean. Moderate security and weather erosion threats face this cemetery. Also pollution and incompatible nearby existing development; vegetation overgrowth seasonally prevents access.

The Prague Jewish Community is the technical owner of all of the Jewish cemeteries in the Czech Republic, most of which are located in towns which no longer have a living Jewish presence. Although some of the Jewish cemeteries around the country have been restored, owing to limited resources no formal efforts have yet been made in Dvůr Králové.



As early as 2007, Eva Nosková and Ota Černý started working to create a meaningful memorial on the site of the Dvůr Králové cemetery and launched a campaign within the town to raise the necessary funds. The rendering on the left is part of their campaign poster. At her funeral, Eva's daughters asked that contributions be made in her memory to help realize this sacred project.

This past August (2015) we learned that the Prague Jewish Community opposed the plan because they feared the proposed memorial might desecrate the sanctity of the now-unmarked plots. We proposed a possible solution. Based on our suggestion, a meeting was held in Dvůr Králové on October 22. According to Petr Papoušek, President of the Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic, the participants included representatives of the Prague Jewish cemeteries management, the Jewish Museum of Prague, the Jewish Community Federation, Ota Černý and Ing. Jan Jarolim, mayor of Dvůr Králové. They agreed to the following: a new perimeter "wall" of 50 cm. demarking and enclosing the cemetery; a wall with the names of the people buried at the cemetery and those of the Shoah victims to be erected on the site of the destroyed back wall of Hevra Kadisha building; The Star of David memorial, currently on the site of the destroyed synagogue (the monument we dedicated with the community in 2008), will be moved to where the ceremonial hall stood at the cemetery and the proposed new, originally intended for the cemetery, will be built on the site of the synagogue.. It is a very ambitious plan and a remarkable tribute by the residents of this town where there are no longer any Jews. Ota has been invited to submit a proposal for the cemetery renovation and names memorial.



Schematic of cemetery plots

OUR OLD-NEW TORAH MANTLES

DEDICATING THE OLD-NEW MANTLES FOR OUR HOLOCAUST TORAH

*Remarks by Rabbi Norman Patz at Temple Sholom of West Essex
April 20, 2012 / Nisan 29, 5772
(excerpted)*

In 2005, we celebrated the 30th year of having a Holocaust scroll at Temple Sholom and Naomi wrote a monograph entitled *Thus We Remember* to record the history of the scroll and its centrality to our congregation. During the Confirmation class trip to Prague and Amsterdam that year, she and I went to the Jewish Museum in Prague to see what ritual objects remained from the destroyed synagogue in Dvůr Králové, the small town in northeastern Bohemia from which the scroll had come. The museum's silver and textiles curators had gathered the objects for us on several tables in the balcony of the Maisel Synagogue. We inspected the Torah crowns, the two breastplates and three pointers, the tzedakah box and the six or seven mantles that had been laid out for us to see. We took photographs as we went from object to object.

Suddenly, Naomi gasped and pointed to the last mantle on the table. It was much smaller than all of the others! Clearly, it was the very mantle that had adorned our scroll when it



was still in the ark of the synagogue in Dvůr Králové! And the mantle was not only small but also fashioned from unusual textiles. The exterior of the mantle had a wide vertical gold stripe enclosing a narrow, barely visible maroon stripe, both on a green background, altogether reminiscent of the French Baroque style. The inside of the mantle was a brightly colored, complex, stylized floral pattern similar to the Wiener Werkstätte designs being crafted in Vienna in the early 20th century.

The leaders of the Dvůr Králové congregation were textile manufacturers by trade. They knew the latest fashions, including the cutting edge avant-garde work being done in Prague and Vienna, and I think they chose these textiles, with their vibrant patterns and colors, to make this unique small scroll especially attractive and particularly appealing to the children of the congregation.

Although we expected to be turned down, we asked Dr. Pavlat, the director of the Jewish Museum in Prague, if we could purchase the mantle from the museum in order to reunite it with our scroll. Not surprisingly, the museum is unwilling to deaccession any of its treasured Holocaust-era holdings. Dr. Pavlat offered to have a facsimile of the mantle made

for us, but it turned out that the design was so complicated and reproducing it such a challenge that his fabricator was unwilling to take on the project.

Three years later, in 2008, when our Confirmation class traveled to Dvůr Králové to help dedicate the monument on the site of the destroyed synagogue, Dr. Ed Gold was one of the trip's participants. During the trip, he heard the story of the mantle and, after he came home, told it to another of our members, Peter Layne, a textile manufacturer. Peter offered to try to create a facsimile textile from our photographs of the original mantle.

The design was indeed so complicated and reproducing it so challenging that it took Peter two years – but he succeeded! From computer design to a beautiful finished product!

Peter was justifiably proud when he presented the bolt of fabric to me last year, and I was thrilled and moved to tears.

Now we have the results: Not one but two new mantles, the first, like the original, with the striped exterior and patterned lining; and a second made with the jazzy pattern of the original interior on the outside and the gold and green striped fabric inside.

These new mantles will adorn the Torah scroll during the weeks around Yom HaShoah and on other appropriate occasions. They will alternate with the other special mantles that have been designed for this Torah. (See pages 26-27.)

So even though this scroll comes to us out of a tragic time in our people's history, we are doing what the original owners of this Torah scroll did. We are joyously taking on the commandment of *hiddur mitzvah* – beautifying our Torah scroll in our love and respect for the Five Books of Moses, the constitution of our people and faith.

Listen to how appropriate for us as we dedicate these mantles is this story from the Talmud:

The Rabbis were discussing the meaning of the Torah verse, “This is my God whom I will glorify,” (Sh'mot/Exodus 15:2) and trying to decide the best way to glorify God. Rabbi Ishmael advised: Set before God a beautiful sukkah, a beautiful etrog, a beautiful tallit, a beautiful Torah that has been written with fine ink by a skilled penman (scribe) and wrap the scroll about with beautiful fabric.” (Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 133b).

“Beautiful fabric” for our precious scroll!

And now, even as we dedicate these old-new mantles for our Holocaust Torah, there is another exciting project underway! The congregation is having gorgeous new mantles designed for all of our Torah scrolls.



A scribe will repair the Holocaust scroll with exquisite penmanship – including adding “crowns” each of us has the opportunity – the privilege – to inscribe on the letters of the Torah, and we will continue to wrap the scroll in fine fabric.

I hope you are participating in repairing the scroll by ornamenting its letters. The privilege – the transcendent feeling of awe you get from actually writing a letter on the parchment – is indescribable. I urge you all to take upon yourselves this mitzvah.



And now I ask you to please stand as a congregation as we place one of the new/old mantles on the scroll.

We call Peter Layne, Ed Gold, Rhoda Portugal Liebowitz (daughter of the scroll’s donor) and Laurie Katzmann and Sam Brummer to the lectern. Laurie and Sam, with deep personal connections to the Holocaust, were two of the four people who held the huppah under which we carried this Torah into our sanctuary in 1977.

Let us join together in the *sheheheyanu* prayer that acknowledges our gratitude and the specialness of this occasion:

We praise You, Eternal our God, Sovereign of the universe, for keeping us alive, sustaining us and enabling us to celebrate this moment in our congregation’s life.

Amen

Peter Layne, z'l, visited the Jewish Museum in Prague during his daughter Jessica's Confirmation class trip, met with Dr. Leo Pavlat, the Museum's director, and was received warmly by the curators of the Textile Conservation Laboratory of the Museum. We honored him at our dedication of the mantles in April, 2012. Peter died in October, 2013 at the age of 68, leaving this precious legacy to our congregation. May his memory be for blessing.

THE MANTLES



The first mantle for our Holocaust scroll was created by Marilyn Arnold, then a student at the Philadelphia School of Design. Of white satin, with vertical stitching depicting flames meant to symbolize the horror of the crematory ovens as well as the cleansing fire of hope, its inscription reads *ood mu-tzal mei-eish* – “a brand plucked from the fire.” (Zechariah 3:2)

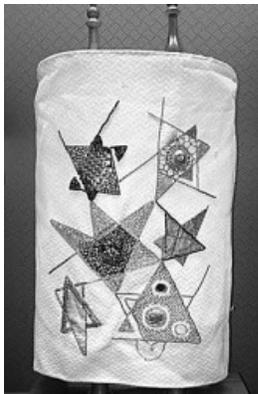
A new mantle of raw silk with a silkscreened phrase from the Book of Ezekiel, was dedicated in 1977, part of the formal dedication of the scroll and its ornaments (including a *keter* and *yad*, and a stand for the scroll inscribed with the bold brass word: *zahkor* – remember. All were designed by Moshe Zabari, then of the Toby Pascher Workshop at the Jewish Museum in New York (See pages 59-60, *Thus We Remember*).

The Hebrew words on mantle translate as:

Then God said to me: “Prophecy to the wind, prophecy, mortal, and say to it: ‘Thus says the Eternal God: Come from the four winds, O breath, come and breathe upon these slain that they may live.’” I began to prophesy as the Eternal One had commanded me. Breath came into them; they came to life and rose to their feet, a mighty host. Then God said to me: “Mortal, these bones are the whole people of Israel....”



The crown reads: *Ah-nei-ni beh-emet yi-sheh-kha* – “Answer me with Your saving grace.”

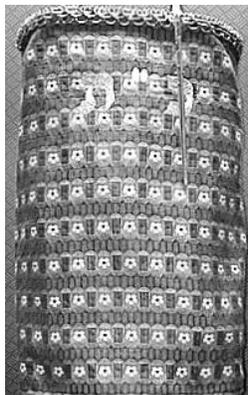


After the Zabari mantle became too fragile to be used on a regular basis, the congregation commissioned Anne Harris to design a mantle whose colors would blend with the mantles she had recently made for the congregation’s two other scrolls. Six distorted and incomplete Stars of David are the unique adornment of this mantle.



Later, a mantle was commissioned by Maxine Myers to ornament the Torah on Sukkot, Pesah and Shavuot, the festivals on which, in ancient times, our ancestors made pilgrimage to Jerusalem. In memory of her father, Carl Leff, a man who dedicated his life to saving Jews and to helping establish and ensure the continued well-being of the State of Israel, the mantle fittingly depicts iconic buildings in modern Jerusalem. Above the skyline is a rampant lion, blessing the city with sparkling stars. It was crafted by a Jerusalemite, Marcia Lewison, who has visited our congregation and was inspired by our scroll.

A new white mantle, silk damask with floral designs featuring pineapples, a sign of prosperity, was created for the High Holy Days, a gift of Audrey and Joel Weinstock. This elaborately woven fabric, like the others, recalls the textile industry in which so many of Dvůr Králové's Jewish community were major figures.



The mantles that replicate the design of the original mantle for this scroll, described in the previous section of the Addendum, adorn the scroll on Yom HaShoah, Kristallnacht and Tisha b'Av.



In 2012, two sets of matching mantles – for weekly use and for the High Holy days – were designed for all three of the congregation's Torah scrolls. The High Holy Day mantles read *teshuvah, tefilah, tzedakah* – repentance, prayer and deeds of righteousness, which “avert the severe decree.” The white mantle for the Holocaust Torah (at right) says *tefilah* – “prayer.” The Shabbat mantles declare “The world stands on three principles: Torah, worship and righteous behavior” – *torah, avodah oo-g'milut hasadim*. (Pirke Avot 1:2). *Avodah* – “worship” – appears on the D'vůr Králové mantle (on the left).



RESTORING AND ORNAMENTING THE SCROLL

In 2012, our congregation undertook a major Torah and ark restoration project which included repairing the Holocaust scroll. As part of the project, members of the congregation had the extraordinary privilege of participating in a time-honored tradition by aiding our scribe Neil Yerman in decorating individual letters of the scroll.

Torah and Ark Restoration



We are preserving our beloved
Holocaust Torah
We are completing our "New"
Torah

TSMC Torah Restoration

Torah is

Our foundation
Our teacher
What makes us a
congregation
What makes us Jewish

Our beloved Holocaust Torah
needs restoration. Our
scrolls need new mantles
and adornments and our
Ark needs refurbishing

As a congregation, we have
an obligation to preserve
our sacred heritage now,
and for future
generations ...

Join us on a sacred journey

The restored Holocaust Torah, the new Torah and new mantles for all three of our Torah scrolls, designed and fabricated by Jeanette Kevin Oren, were dedicated on Simhat Torah.

TORAH DEDICATION SERVICE OCTOBER 7, 2012 / 22 TISHRI 5773

Welcome: Rabbi Groffman

Opening Song: Standing on the Shoulders

Rabbi Groffman: One event stands out above all others in the memory of our people: When God revealed the Torah, no bird chirped, no fowl beat its wings, no ox bellowed, the angels did not sing, the sea did not stir, no creature uttered a sound. The world was silent and still, and the Divine Voice spoke: “I am the Lord your God, these are the words of the Torah.”

Rabbi Groffman: What is Torah?

All: It is what God has revealed to us, and what we have come to understand about God.

Rabbi Groffman: It is the ideas and ideals, the laws and commandments that make up our religious heritage.

All: It is the experience of Abraham and Sarah, the legislation of Moses, the vision of the Prophets, the community of the Rabbis, the insight of the Mystics.

Rabbi Groffman: It is the questions we ask, and the answers we receive, when we seek to understand God, the world, and ourselves.

All: It is the way of life; the path of self-fulfillment; the design for a better world.

Rabbi Groffman: Assemble the people – men, women, and children, and the strangers in your cities – to hear, to learn to revere the Lord your God, to observe faithfully the words of this Torah. And let their children who do not yet know it hear, that they too may learn to revere the Lord your God.

Please Rise

Rabbi Groffman: Sinai was only the beginning. The Torah has never ceased to grow. In every age its spirit has been strengthened and enlarged. Let us give thanks for the wise and noble of every age who, by word and example, have lived by the light of the Torah.

All: Today we rejoice! We are heirs to the covenant at Mount Sinai: the laws and the teachings, the values and the ideals. The scroll of the Torah is the symbol of our heritage and our covenant. We celebrate as we welcome a new Sefer Torah and rededicate our Holocaust Torah to our Synagogue.

Dedicatory Prayer

Rabbi Groffman: Temple Sholom is a house of prayer.

All: Temple Sholom is a community of worshippers.

Rabbi Groffman: Temple Sholom is a center for Jewish activity.

All: Temple Sholom is a place of Jewish study.

Rabbi Groffman: Within these walls we worship our God.

All: Within these walls we feel the companionship of our fellow Jews.

Rabbi Groffman: Within these walls we study and learn the teachings of our tradition.

All: Within these walls we rededicate ourselves to our people and to our God.

Rabbi Groffman: Here we learn about our glorious past.

All: Here we feel the promise of a glorious future.

Rabbi Groffman: Here we learn that Judaism has a meaningful place in our lives today.

All: Here we make Judaism an integral part of our living.

Rabbi Groffman: On this eve of dedication we ask, O God, that Your divine inspiration guide us in our lives and bring forth in us the desire to live in Your image. Infuse our minds and hearts with the divine spark which ignites the fire of faith.

All: Give us the impulse to heed the exhortations of the prophets and the teachings of the sages that we may keep this fire of faith aglow.



From left to right: Rhoda (Portugal) Leibowitz, Janet (Oettinger) Eisenstein, Laurie Katzmman, Sam Brummer

NEW CONNECTIONS

I.

Shortly after we dedicated the monument in Dvůr Králové, Alan Edelstein, a past president of Temple Emanuel in Newton, Massachusetts contacted Rabbi Patz, who was for many years President of the Society for the History of Czechoslovak Jews, to ask if he knew anything about the town from which Temple Emanuel's Holocaust Torah came. Perhaps. What town was it? Dvůr Králové. Did we have information for him? Did we ever!

In fact, in 1977, in response to a request from Elsie Pollack, then chair of Temple Emanuel's Holocaust Torah committee, Rabbi Patz had shared with them what we then knew about Dvůr Králové in preparation for the dedication in that year of their newly-acquired Torah scroll from Dvůr Králové. But with the passage of some 40 years and the retirement of Rabbi Samuel Chiel, who was Temple Emanuel's rabbi when the scroll was dedicated, the Holocaust Torah committee was newly in need of information as they prepared to rededicate their scroll. On April 27, 2009 Rabbi Patz was invited by Rabbi Wesley Gardenswartz to be the principal speaker at Temple Emanuel's elaborate rededication ceremony. Rabbi Patz brought with him greetings and congratulations from the then-current mayor of Dvůr Králové, Edita Vanková, and from Eva Nosková. Eva's letter read, in part:

I cannot begin to tell you how pleased I am that our community continues in the synagogues in America. I think I can say it is a miracle; our members are still alive through your scrolls, and I hope this will last forever. Thank God there are still places that remember the Jews who were lost in the Shoah, who keep their hearts and souls alive in memory.

Alan Edelstein, who chaired the Holocaust Memorial Committee, focused his remarks at the rededication on the importance of remembering the people whose scroll the congregation cherished:

Over the years as I would pass by our Holocaust Torah, on display in its niche of honor, I would feel rather uneasy, or unsettled, for there seemed to be something missing. I have always believed that a Torah represents people, and that without people, a Torah is not meaningful. My quest for the people behind our Holocaust Torah began three years ago. It culminated in finding the names, ages and places of the deaths of the 122 people from the town of Dvůr Králové who were exterminated by the Nazis during World War II.

He also quoted a message from Vera Woldenberg of Chicago, the grandniece of Emil Oplatka, a Jewish citizen of Dvůr Králové who was murdered at Auschwitz along with three other members of the Oplatka family. Ms. Woldenberg asked that her thoughts be read at the dedication:

I awakened this morning with thoughts of the “lost” Oplatkas of Dvůr Králové as well as their fellow congregants. I’m grateful to you, to Rabbi Patz, and to all the congregation of Temple Emanuel who will dedicate the “Wall of Remembrance.”

One of the most moving elements of the rededication program, which also served as a Yom HaShoah commemoration, was the reading by the children of the religious school and the teenagers who were members of United Synagogue Youth of the name of each of the Jews of Dvůr Králové who perished. They pronounced each name in perfect Czech, having had the privilege of learning them from Hana and Edgar Krasa. Krasa, a survivor who roomed with Rafael Schächter in Terezín, was a member of the chorus when Schächter conducted the Verdi Requiem there in 1944; Krasa is featured in “The Defiant Requiem.”



The Dvůr Králové scroll, which is ritually impure, is permanently housed in this beautiful case in the synagogue’s “great room” which serves as both lobby and reception hall. The Hebrew word ZAKHOR – REMEMBER! – is emblazoned above the scroll. On both sides are the names of the men, women and children of Dvůr Králové who were murdered during the Holocaust and the place of their death, where known. On the front of the stand holding the Torah scroll is information about the scroll’s history and about the Memorial Scrolls Trust. The panels are illuminated on Yom HaShoah.

Four or, perhaps, five additional congregations are custodians of scrolls from Dvůr Králové: Beth El at the Wellington Jewish Community Centre in Wellington, New Zealand; Temple Beth El in Geneva, New York; Hillel at the Claremont Colleges, in Claremont, California; Temple Israel in Ottawa, Canada; and possibly Western Marble Arch Synagogue in London, United Kingdom. We have been in touch with all of them and received the following:

From Rabbi Yitzchak Mizrahi of Beth El, the Wellington Jewish Community Center, Rabbinic Administrator, Kosher Kiwi in Wellington, New Zealand:

Yes, we have two Czech scrolls, one of which – Memorial Scrolls Trust #47, the scroll from Dvůr Králové – we “inherited” when the Auckland Hebrew Congregation in Newton, New Zealand closed. Both Czech scrolls are in the ark, although neither of them is in a kosher state. I have only been here a short while, so I still know very little about the scroll and its origins. Here is a photograph of the sanctuary of our shul and a picture of the scroll.



The mantle of this beautifully adorned scroll bears the same legend as our first Holocaust Torah mantle: “*Ood mu-tzal mei-eish* – a brand plucked from the fire.” The phrase is preceded here by the words *ha-sefer ha-zeh*: “This scroll [is].” It is a powerful statement of purpose and faith.

From Rabbi Ann Landowne at Temple Beth El in Geneva, New York:

Thank you for following up with us. I am a fairly new rabbi here so this provides a good opportunity to do some research about our tradition with the scroll and learn more about its history. We have the certificate describing the scroll framed in our entrance hall. We truly appreciate receiving the names of the Jews from Dvůr Králové who perished, which we will add to our *Yahrzeit* list.

I know that a sofer examined and repaired the scroll prior to my beginning at the temple. I have been told that the scroll is not kosher, but I will check on this as I am not certain. Certainly, large sections of the Torah are quite useable. It is a unique scroll, tall and relatively lightweight because the parchment isn't coated. It is extremely soft and (I

understand) is made of deerskin. There is very little space between the words, which makes it a bit challenging to read, but it is quite readable throughout most, if not all, of the text. We keep the Torah in the *Aron Kodesh* fully dressed and adorned and I read the Torah portion *Nitzavim* from this scroll on Yom Kippur morning, have it displayed in our Torah holder as a "witness" to a Bar or Bat Mitzvah and I speak about the history of the scroll once or twice a year. It is the tall scroll on the left in the photograph below.



From Rabbi Daveen Litwin at the Claremont Colleges:

We do indeed have a Dvůr Králové scroll as part of Hillel at the Claremont Colleges. We are a Hillel, but as we are located within the multifaith Chaplaincy at The Claremont Colleges we do not have separate building or permanent space for the ark, so the ark containing the Torah scrolls is stored away when not brought out for Shabbat or holy days. The Dvůr Králové scroll is one of our three scrolls and it is centrally positioned in the ark, part of every Shabbat service during the academic year. When we read the martyrology, we explain the significance of the scroll and a bit of the background.



We are grateful and honored that the Hillel of the Claremont Colleges is part of an extended community of congregations that not only remembers the Jewish people of Dvůr Králové but brings the scroll to life again week after week throughout the years with respect, reverence and responsibility. Because our congregants are mainly

members of a student population, we do not have a weekly *kaddish* list or Memorial Book for Yom Kippur, but the idea is beautiful! We will think about a way to incorporate and memorialize these names at other times.

Rabbi Robert Morais of Temple Israel in Ottawa, Canada, wrote:

We do in fact have MST scroll #355 from Dvůr Králové. I am new to Temple Israel and have not yet had the opportunity to carefully examine the scroll. It is kept in our ark. As per the new guidelines from the Trust, we expect to be doing more with the scroll in the coming years.



There is a question about one of the scrolls. When the Marble Arch and Western synagogues in London merged, the new congregation – Western Marble Arch – had two scrolls, one from Dvůr Králové and the other from Ostrava. The Memorial Scrolls Trust, following its normal practice when congregations merge, asked that one of the scrolls be returned. Western Marble Arch believed that the scroll it kept was the scroll from Ostrava. However, according to the information we received from the Trust, that scroll was returned to MST (“collected and signed for”) and it was the scroll from Dvůr Králové that remained in the synagogue. The Trust and the synagogue are now attempting to resolve the discrepancy and determine which scroll is where – either at the synagogue or once again stored in the Westminster Synagogue headquarters of the Trust. In any event, if the West Marble Arch Synagogue believes that its scroll is from Ostrava, clearly at this point they are doing nothing relative to its (possible) Dvůr Králové provenance. An unfinished story....

II.

Thus We Remember includes a section on “Famous Sons of Dvůr Králové” (we know of no “famous” Jewish women from the town). Among them was Karl Freund, “who grew up to be a brilliant horror film cinematographer and director and, ultimately, a television cameraman for the ‘I Love Lucy’ TV show” (*Thus We Remember*, pages 43-44). In April, 2013 Rabbi Patz received an email message from Rodney Martel, a psychologist in Minneapolis:

“My name is Rod Martel. I am the grandson of director/cinematographer Karl Freund. I am trying to get a contact in that town. I don’t know if anyone there knows that one of their most famous residents was actually a Jew. Also, I was hoping to be able to access a synagogue list with my grandfather’s name on it. The synagogue was built in 1890, the year he was born. Karl Freund’s nephew, my cousin, Frans Weisz, is a Dutch film director. My grandmother brought her jewelry from Berlin to the Netherlands, where her son, Geza, Frans’s father was living. When Frans was two years old, his father was deported to Auschwitz and killed there. By the way, my mother, Karl Freund’s daughter, is 96 years old. When she was in her late 80s, I brought her here from the Canary Islands where she had lived for 21 years.”

We were able to provide him with the information he requested and put him in touch with Eva Nosková.

III.

And, out of the blue, another connection with a Dvůr Králové family!

In June, 2014 Rabbi Patz got a telephone call from Robert Breuer, who lives in Berkeley, California. Breuer, who had read of our relationship with Dvůr Králové, was working on his own family’s history and wanted both to learn what we could tell him about the Jewish community of the town and also to share with us information about his Dvůr Králové relatives, 14 of whose names appear on our congregational *yahrzeit* list together with the names of our own beloved who have died: Karel, Gita, Ilsa and Marketa Breuer; Louis, Tomas, Jana and Katerina Gelber; Karel and Marie Kohn; Kurt, Eva and Marta Wurzburg, and Marta Zaludova. Now we know more about some of them as well as about other members of his family whose names we did not yet have – a reminder that there are many names, even from the small Jewish community of Dvůr Králové, that are forever lost.

The phone call gave us chills. Yet again, as when we heard from Rod Martel, it reminded us dramatically that the Holocaust is not ancient history – it is the story of “real” men, women and children – the parents and grandparents, siblings and cousins – of people who are alive today.

We sent Robert Breuer a copy of *Thus We Remember* and he has provided us with the following bits of information about members of his family. It helps personalize the atrocity and connects us further with the real individuals from whose Torah scroll we read, that we

kiss when it is carried into the congregation, real people who were murdered because they were Jews.

Robert's grandfather, Felix Breuer, was the son of Karl Breuer. He and his brother Ernst, who died before the Second World War, were partners in the Karl Breuer und Sohne textile printing factory in Dvůr Králové. Their sister, Ida Breuer Hacker and her husband, Adolf Hacker were both murdered in the Holocaust. Felix, who headed up the company's Vienna offices, and his wife Maria, were deported from Vienna to Terezín; both died in Auschwitz.

Felix's son, Hans, and his wife Olga – Robert Breuer's parents – together with their son Stephen were the only members of the Breuer family to escape the Nazis. Eight of Robert's cousins, died in the deportations: Mancí, Jozsi and Katu (Kate) Schwarz; Kurt and Eva Wurzburg; Hanni (Jana) and Tommy Gelber, and Gitty(Gita)Breuer. Some of them lived in Dvůr Králové at the time they were deported; the other families most likely lived in Prague.

Robert shared with us additional details about his aunt, Ilsa Zalud Breuerova, and her brother Franz Zalud. Ilse (Robert offers both spellings) was the wife of Karel Breuer and the mother of Gita. All of them were killed in Auschwitz-Birkenau. Ilse's brother Franz survived by escaping to Russia and joining a fighting force there that was tasked with infiltrating Czechoslovakia. After the war, Franz returned home to Dvůr Králové and, presuming himself to be the sole survivor of the family, filed a claim for the Breuer textile factory there. (As noted above, Robert Breuer's father, a far more direct heir, was also alive but had fled to the West.) Zalud's claim was rejected. Ironically, when the Communist era began, he was hired to run what had formerly been the family's factory. (The Communist government nationalized and unified all 15 of the textile factories in town and ran them as a single entity from the centrally located former Breuer factory.)

Robert also sent us his transcription of what he describes as

a deeply sad but revealing – considering censorship – handwritten letter from Ilsa Breuerova, mother of Gita and wife of Karl Breuer, whose mother Grete lived with them in Dvůr Králové. All of them were murdered soon after the letter was sent. This is the last letter that my parents, Hans and Olly, ever received from the Dvůr Králové family. There is a reference in the letter to certain regrets which directly relate to my parents' attempt to take the baby, Gita, along with them when they themselves fled from Prague in November 1938. They had contacted Ilse and Karl, who at the time were in Paris on business. My father pleaded with them not to return to Czechoslovakia and to allow Gita, who had remained with a nanny in Dvůr Králové, to be taken to America by my parents along with my older brother, who was the same age. (I was not yet born.) Karl was against the idea, and Gita was murdered with the rest of the family. It is a tragic story that I heard several times during my childhood.

Here is Robert Breuer's translation of the letter Ilsa Breuerova wrote on November 24, 1941 to his parents, Hans and Olga, who were already in the United States.

Dear Ones,

We were very happy to hear from you personally after such a long time. Unfortunately, news from you is very rare these days but for us it is a most welcome breath of fresh air and we are happy that you're doing so well. We especially enjoyed the descriptions of your vacation and found that very interesting. We can't even imagine such a life any longer and are happy that it does still exist and that it's possible for you.

Karl often blames himself (too late, unfortunately) for not having listened to your and my prodding; our lives would be much easier now. My aunt also seems to have given up any hope that we will see each other ever again, and for me that was the last hope left.¹ Now all one can do is adjust to everything, give thanks to God for every day and be glad for one's health. What I would give for the chance to once again be able to schmooze with you as much as the heart desires,² something I always loved to do with you two. It's been three years since we said good-bye, and I remember everything as if it were just two weeks ago.

So much has happened in the meantime, things one never could have imagined, but I tell myself that it has not harmed me, that it all just has strengthened my self-confidence and self-awareness. We ourselves always try to maintain a good state of mind, as much as possible. We often spend time with our mutual friends and relatives. The Kohns also became quickly adjusted to their new apartment and things have become routine.

My thoughts are often with you during this month and I'm wondering how Lisl is doing, and I hope that everything went smoothly and quickly. Boy or girl? Please tell me everything. I regret very much that Gita is so alone and would like to have managed to provide [her with] a little sister or brother. She has a lot of playmates; almost every day she and Tommy spend time together, he lives close to us now. Käte is very industrious though unfortunately quite nervous. Lutz works hard the whole day but is quite skillful.

Many thanks for the delightful pictures of Steffl. He really seems to be a delightful child who brings you much joy. How wonderful that he has the chance to grow up in such a country!

Gita is a dear little brat, sometimes she is a bit disobedient but she is our only ray of sunshine. She is quite affected by the well-known problems and cannot comprehend much of it; just the same as for us. It is a pity that a child has to think about such matters today. Just be glad that Steffl was

able to forget all that! Gita speaks only Czech though she understands everything said to her in German.

The news about my brother is all excellent, thank God. I've already told you how well he did with his studies and graduation. Now he has a very good job in a large firm plus he teaches every night at the university. He is a competent man and it is only due to the circumstances of the times that he has [not] been [better] able to fully develop his abilities and knowledge. Unfortunately my mother is not with us here. Last year, in September, she went to Prague and then was unable to return; we have not seen each other for over a year. You can imagine how hard this separation has been for us. One is so near and yet so far.

I think I've told you everything now. There is so much to talk about but one cannot put it all down onto paper. Enjoy the beautiful life and be happy and content! Your worries about us are only bad for your health, and they cannot help us.

Greetings also from Karl. I'm glad that he is busy all day even if the work doesn't bring much. This way his days are full and he is more content. Mama Breuer is in good health; she also has changed in a positive way. She also sends her greetings.

Please don't let so much time pass again! Many greetings and kisses

Ilse

Robert Breuer appended the following explanatory notes to Ilse's letter:

¹ *"der einzige rettende Strohalm"* = literally "the last straw for rescue" - an expression meaning "the only hope." It is not clear whether the writer is indicating the chance for a physical rescue or means it more in a psychological sense.

² German mentions "*Leber*" = liver, from the expression "*von der Leber reden*" – to speak openly about personal matters.

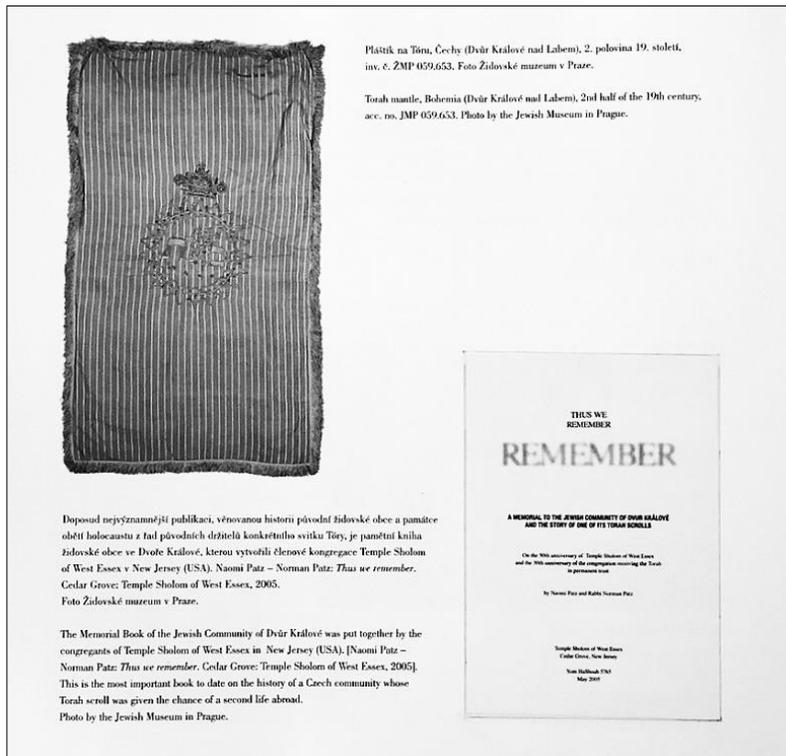
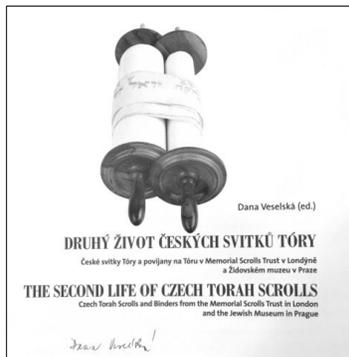


This photograph from the virtually destroyed cemetery in Dvůr Králové shows the headstone of a member of the Breuer family (lower right), in one of two makeshift memorials created from stones salvaged from the ruins.

TEMPLE SHOLOM AND DVŮR KRÁLOVÉ

AT THE JEWISH MUSEUM IN PRAGUE

The Jewish Museum in Prague has included the connection between our congregation and Dvůr Králové in two of its special exhibitions in the last nine years. Each exhibition was accompanied by a full catalogue. The first is “The Second Life of Czech Torah Scrolls: Czech Torah Scrolls and Binders from the Memorial Scrolls Trust in London and the Jewish Museum in Prague.” This 2006 exhibition was curated by Dana Veselská. Both the exhibition and the catalogue highlight the 2005 monograph *Thus We Remember* by Naomi and Rabbi Norman Patz, describing it as “one of the most effective publications on the history of Bohemian and Moravian Jewish communities with focus on a specific scroll,” and adding, “This is the most important book to date on the history of a Czech community whose Torah scroll was given the chance of a second life abroad.”





The second exhibition, entitled “Symbols of Emancipation: Nineteenth Century Synagogues in the Czech Lands,” is a selection of the magnificent synagogues built by the Jewish communities of Bohemia and Moravia in the second half of the 19th century. This 2013 exhibition was curated by Arno Pařík. The page describing the Dvůr Králové synagogue has four photographs of the synagogue and the text reports that “On 16 February 2008, a Star of David memorial was unveiled on the site of the demolished synagogue. The unveiling ceremony was attended by Rabbi Norman Patz and many of the congregants of Temple Sholom, New Jersey, which has a Torah scroll from the Dvůr Králové synagogue.”

Dvůr Králové

The Jewish community in Dvůr Králové was established after the mid-19th century. Its synagogue was built in 1888–91 near the main square, to a design by the Prague architect Stanislav Trágl. It had the layout of a Byzantine temple with a dome over the central area. The building was devastated during the Nazi occupation and later used as a storehouse. In 1966 it was demolished to make way for a road extension. On 16 February 2008, a Star-of-David memorial was unveiled on the site of the demolished synagogue. The unveiling ceremony was attended by Rabbi Norman Patz and many of the congregants of Temple Sholom, New Jersey, which has a Torah scroll from the Dvůr Králové synagogue.

Synagogue in Dvůr Králové, view from the south-west, ca. 1961, JHP Archives

Western facade of the synagogue in Dvůr Králové, ca. 1921, JHP Photo Archive

Interior of the synagogue in Dvůr Králové, ca. 1921, JHP Photo Archive

Demolition of the northern part of the synagogue in Dvůr Králové, 1966, JHP Archives

During the course of one of their visits with Arno Parik, at the Jewish Museum in Prague, Rabbi Norman and Naomi Patz had an unexpected, oddly tactile encounter with the Dvůr Králové synagogue. They were showing Dr. Parik the printed copy of *Thus We Remember*.



Suddenly, he slapped his forehead and told them there was something he should have shown them before they put together the monograph and opened a large metal storage cabinet in his cluttered, document-strewn office. There, at the very front of the third shelf from the top, was a small, bulbous verdigris-covered copper object. It was the cap of the spire of the Dvůr Králové synagogue, missing only the Jewish star from its very top! Although they were sure there was no way that the museum would even temporarily deaccession it, they asked if there were any chance that they could borrow it to display in the TSWE museum case, but Dr. Parik, with apologies, said it was impossible to do.



**ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS
TO THE LIST OF MARTYRS IN
*THUS WE REMEMBER***

As in the list in *Thus We Remember*, this information includes – where known – Nazi records giving the date and designation of the transport on which the deportees from Dvůr Králové arrived in Terezín, the date of their departure to the East and the transport designation, and their date and place of death where that is known. The 23 names listed below were provided to us by Eva Nosková and Robert Breuer. They supplement the original list of 111 names or correct errors or add information we didn't have. Each week at Temple Sholom of West Essex, we read six names of people murdered during the Holocaust together with the names of congregational and family members whose *yahrzeits* are being observed. Every week, two of those names come from our list of 129 known Jews from Dvůr Králové who were murdered during the Holocaust.

Greta Weiss-Abraham

murdered somewhere in Romania

Tonicka Abraham

born 1936

murdered somewhere in Romania

Felix Breuer

born February 4, 1871

arrived in Terezín August 20, 1942 IV/8 –113

transported to Auschwitz October 28, 1944 – Ev 873

murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau

Marie Breuerová

born January 9, 1884

arrived in Terezín August 20, 1942 IV/8 –114

transported to Auschwitz October 28, 1944 – Ev 872

murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau

Margareta Pollaková Breuerová

Name provided by Robert Breuer; listed in *Thus We Remember* as Markéta Breuerová

Oskar Dubsky

presumably murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau

Adolf Hacker

born November 23, 1870

arrived in Terezín July 10, 1942 IV/3 – 479

transported to Auschwitz May 15, 1944 – DZ 1396

murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau

Ida Breuer Hacker

born July 15, 1878

arrived in Terezín July 10, 1942 IV/3 – 480

died in Terezín July 5, 1943

Ritscha Breuer Kohnová

born July 15, 1878

arrived in Terezín December 17, 1942 – Ch 93

died in Terezín March 31, 1944

her husband, Karel Kohn, remained in Terezín and was liberated in May, 1945, the only survivor of that family (per information provided by Robert Breuer)

Gustav Lederer

fate unknown

Karel Lederer

1941 Buchenwald

Max Mahler

His name appears on the list in *Thus We Remember*;

the following additional information was supplied by Eva Nosková:

transported July 11, 1943

Josef Popper and family

fate unknown

Paula Schleinová

born April 18, 1875

arrived in Terezín December 17, 1942 – Ch

transported to Auschwitz December 15, 1943 – Dr

murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau

Josef Sochor

transported to Flossenburg, probably on June 14, 1942

murdered in Flossenburg

Pavel Sochor

correction of the information in *Thus We Remember*:

Pavel Sochor was murdered in Auschwitz on November 26, 1942

Hanuš Stein

additional information provided by Eva Nosková:

Hanuš Stein was on the transport that reached Auschwitz on January 19, 1944

Max Weigl

born April 5, 1885

arrived in Terezín December 22, 1942 – Ck
transported to Auschwitz October 12, 1944 - Eq
murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau

Anna Weissová

born August 3, 1880

arrived in Terezín December 21, 1942 – Ci
transported to Auschwitz October 12, 1944 – Eq
murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau

Hanna Weissová

born December 17, 1913

arrived in Terezín December 21, 1942 – Ci
transported to Auschwitz September 6, 1943 – D1
murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau

Eugen Wurzburg

DOB unknown

arrived in Terezín December 17, 1942 – Ch
transported to Auschwitz December 15, 1943 – Dr
murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau

Marta Kohn Wurzburg

born January 12, 1906

transported to Auschwitz December 15, 1943 – Dr
murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau July 11, 1944 (per Robert Breuer)

All the prisoners who were sent to Auschwitz on December 15, 1943 on Transport Dr spent six and a half months in the Czech Family Camp. They were sent to the gas chambers on July 11, 1944. Eugen and Marta Kohn Wurzburg and Paula Schleinová were among them.

(See page 32-33 of *Thus We Remember* and the next pages of this Addendum for more information.)

POSTSCRIPT

I.

“MUSEUM TO THE EXTERMINATED ETHNOGRAPHIC SPECIES”: CORRECTING A 50 YEAR OLD ERROR

On page 51 of *Thus We Remember*, we state that the Nazis intended to create a “museum to the exterminated ethnographic species” in Prague. The creation of such a museum seemed to make perverse – even obscene – sense of an otherwise incomprehensible reality: Why was collecting and preserving Judaica there while at the same time in all the other countries that came under Nazi control, these precious objects were being looted, melted down or simply destroyed?

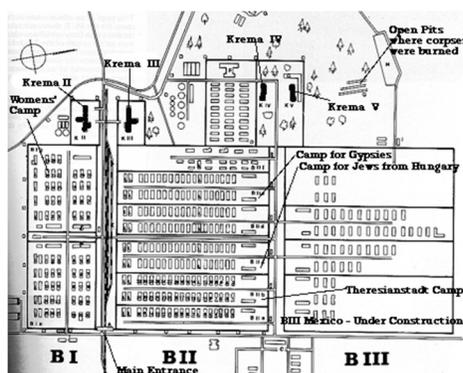
The truth now appears to be more complex. Updated historical research by Magda Veselská of the Jewish Museum in Prague has determined that this was never the Nazis’ intention. It was, rather, a story fabricated by the Czech historian H.G. Adler and the Czech essayist and novelist Egon Erwin Kisch in the early 1960s, and promoted by Vilém Benda, the Communist-appointed director of the State Jewish Museum at the time. Benda may have spread the idea of a “museum of the liquidated race” in an effort to draw international attention to its collections.

According to Veselská’s magisterial study of the history of the museum, *Archa paměti. Cesta pražského židovského muzea pohnutým 20. stoletím* (in English, into which the book unfortunately has not yet been translated: Ark of Memory. The Jewish Museum in Prague’s Journey through the Turbulent Twentieth Century), the primary motivation for assembling as many of the Judaica objects as could be collected from the Jewish communities of Bohemia and Moravia had nothing to do with a museum to the “exterminated ethnographic species.” As we wrote in *Thus We Remember* (page 51), the initiative came from “officials of the Jewish community” whose goal was “to safeguard whatever ritual objects, books and archives they could preserve.” Dr. Karel Stein was the initiator of this effort.

It appears that the Nazis never had a coherent plan, and why they accepted the proposal and allowed the collection and preservation of thousands of Judaica objects remains a mystery.

II.

ANOTHER ANOMALY: THE RED CROSS AND THE FAMILY CAMP AT BIRKENAU



Forty-four men, women and children – fully one third of Dvůr Králové’s Jews – were deported from Terezín to the Family Camp BIIb established at Birkenau by the Nazis in September 1943. The designation on their deportation orders – SB6 – apparently stood for *Sonderbehandlung 6* – “Special Handling with Six Month Quarantine.” This extraordinary camp was situated just inside the main entrance to Birkenau, right next to the railroad siding where newly arrived prisoners were selected. The first group imprisoned in the family camp came from Terezín on transports D1 and Dm in September, and the second group on transport Dr in December. They did not undergo the usual selection, which took place as prisoners were herded off the box cars: the

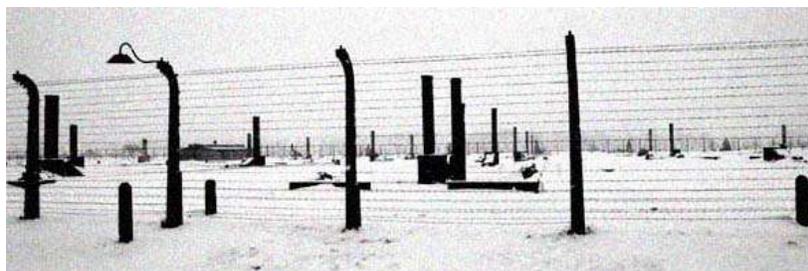
relatively small number of able-bodied to one side, to be sent to forced labor subcamps, the rest immediately sent to the gas chambers. Their heads were not shaved on arrival; they were given a hardly more than bare subsistence food ration; families were permitted to stay together, and adults were not prohibited from making efforts to educate and entertain the children. Despite these “privileges,” they were set to hard labor and the mortality rate was high.

For many years, Rabbi Patz taught his students about the Family Camp without being able to explain the anomaly of its existence, of why the Nazis had established and maintained it within sight of the crematoria of one of the most horrific of the death camps. It was only when we began to do research on Naomi’s play, *The Last Cyclist*, that we learned the probable reason.

It seems that the International Red Cross had gotten the Germans to agree to allowing a team of Red Cross representatives from Switzerland and Denmark to make two investigative visits: first to Terezín in June, 1944 and then to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Scholars now speculate that the Nazis created the Family Camp in anticipation that such a visit might follow the visit to Terezín. How they would have hidden the apparatus of the murder factory that was – except for the Family Camp – the sole function of Birkenau seems incomprehensible to us, and apparently it is what the Nazis decided as well, because they began to liquidate the Family Camp on erev Purim, March 7-8, 1944, six months after the arrival of the first transport (“6 month quarantine”). We know that the Nazis were so successful in camouflaging the true conditions in Terezín that the members of the Red Cross delegation decided it was unnecessary to make this second visit. But, either because they wished to be prepared should there be a Red Cross visit or because they so rigidly adhered to their own regulations, they continued to maintain the second group in the Family Camp the full six and a half months after their arrival, and only then sent them to be gassed en masse on July 10-11, 1944.

There had been a total of 17,500 prisoners in the Family Camp; 1,294 of them survived.

No one from Dvůr Králové survived the Family Camp.



PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

Jewish Museum in Prague: cover, pages 14, 21, 39, 40 top, 46
Dvůr Králové dedication photographer, Mr. Bartoska: page 15
Courtesy of Ota Černý: pages 12, 18, 19, 22
David Greenfield: page 32
Ann Landowne: page 34
Daveen Litwin: page 34
Yitzchak Mizrahi: page 33
Robert Morais: page 35
Larry Plaxe: pages 4, 16, 25
Naomi Patz: pages 11, 18, 19, 20
Norman Patz: pages 23, 24, 26, 27, 30, 40 (bottom), 47





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